

DIFFERENTIATION IN DIGITAL PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS. A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

There has been a long-time debate in the literature about the differentiation of advertising messages¹, both in academic discussions and in the international advertising practice². However, many authors point out that few studies compare multiple countries and analyze the same elements at a global level, as well as across local versions³.

The “global” definition of advertising leaves room for many interpretations. Several aspects should be considered when speaking of the global advertising framework. These are regional/ global awareness, availability of brands, acceptance, and demand, positioning, personality, the “look and feel” in major markets⁴. The global consumer culture is perceived as a set of related symbols and behaviors which are commonly understood, yet not necessarily shared by consumers and businesses. It does not stand for *homogenization* of values, as many perceive it, as much as *diffusion* of consumption signs and behaviors, from Western to Eastern countries. And one of the driving forces of this is *international advertising*⁵.

Earlier studies point out that global advertising should be conceptualized based on a continuum. It should range from local to

¹ Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, “Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising,” 491.

² Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, “Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads,” 2.

³ Nelson and Paek, “A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies,” 66; Fastoso and Whitelock, “Regionalization vs. Globalization in Advertising Research: Insights from Five Decades of Academic Study,” 34.

⁴ Özsumer & Altaras, 2008 in Akaka and Alden, “Global Brand Positioning and Perceptions. International Advertising and Global Consumer Culture,” 42.

⁵ Akaka and Alden, 38.

global, and vice-versa, not treated as two fixed ends. One should focus on identifying which elements of advertising are differentiated or standardized⁶. Both schools of thought that follow either the standardized or the differentiated approach, logically reveal the benefits the brands can obtain by applying a fluid approach. An incoherent positioning on the extremes would not serve any brand ⁷.

The global advertising agencies are active players and fuel the social and cultural transformations in various markets, analyzing advertising messages to flourish and to open the space for research across several countries. The interest in global advertising and cross-cultural frameworks is on the rise⁸. Previous studies mainly focused on the comparison of two countries -the USA and Russia- ⁹ with the USA as the point of reference. Yet, too few tackle a more in-depth weaving of the American-European relationship. The present book proposes a parallel between several European countries- the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Romania- and the USA, with a focus on the brands' executions, revealing important characteristics for each category. This case study paves the path to seeing how brands opted for differentiation in their advertising message, from language to visual metaphors.

⁶ Taylor, "Moving International Advertising Research Forward: A New Research Agenda," 8; Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, "Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union."

⁷ Phui and Yazdanifard, "Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing," 42.

⁸ Streibinger et al., "Is Multi-Ethnic Advertising a Globally Viable Strategy for a Western Luxury Car Brand? A Mixed-Method Cross-Cultural Study"; Sharma and Kaur, "Modeling the Elements and Effects of Global Viral Advertising Content: A Cross-Cultural Framework."

⁹ Ustinova, "English and American Appeal in Russian Advertising"; Wang and Sun, "Examining the Role of Beliefs and Attitudes in Online Advertising. A Comparison between the USA and Romania"; Tsai, "Bicultural Advertising and Hispanic Acculturation"; Pineda, Hernández-Santaolalla, and del Mar Rubio-Hernández, "Individualism in Western Advertising: A Comparative Study of Spanish and US Newspaper Advertisements."

The aim is to uncover how the concept of *differentiation* is transposed in international digital print ads. At the same time, the study proposes an in-depth perspective on how language affects the perception of messages which are conveyed the most in the international landscape and how this relationship intermediates the relationship of the consumer with the brand.

The following chapter will be guiding the reader through the main conjunctions between the international and local landscapes and the leading advertising processes tuned to different local contexts.

PART 1

INTERCULTURALITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As the global approaches propel changes, the unusual and accelerated growth of international advertising and communication creativity stimulates specialists to break former boundaries and look from new angles. This unique interdisciplinary “movement” embodies brand activity, the social media outburst, the ascension of mobile devices, technological assimilation, online sharing, new learning frameworks, and purposeful and directed creativity ¹⁰.

In the past two decades, digital technologies had a substantial effect on the diffusion of cultural content, contributing to the construction of social and economic value ¹¹. The research dedicated to cross-cultural communication practices in the digital realm frequently delves into the changing notions of communities, identities, and belongingness in the globalization era. Within these approaches, literacy research also focuses on the international flows of copywriting tailored to the digital medium ¹².

What is the *culture* in the digital context? The concept itself bears numerous meanings and could be approached from many perspectives. The focus is on cultural implications that are directly connected to the digital expressions in the global communication contexts, with a focus on advertising. We look at trends and tendencies advertising gathered in the past couple of years, motivating why the digital collection and analysis of the materials provides the most comprehensive overview.

¹⁰ Sasser, “International Advertising Creativity,” 205.

¹¹ Pesce, Neirotti, and Paolucci, “When Culture Meets Digital Platforms: Value Creation and Stakeholders’ Alignment in Big Data Use,” 1.

¹² Domingo, “Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making,” 9.

The term *culture* applies to ethnic or national segments. Subsequently, it splits different groups within society at different levels: age, profession, social class. The expressions of culture are numerous: from eating habits that vary depending on the country, the dress codes according to the job domain, and the gender roles people adopt. The cultural groups which bestow the same values to other segments share various degrees of *homogeneity* ¹³. However, there are regional nuances, as on the same continent, different regions or provinces which were historically governed separately (e.g., Spain and Germany) might have different values ¹⁴.

Often ignored in current advertising research is *cultural insight*. It is developed from the social environment, which embraces both consumers and brands. It is embedded in the understanding of symbolic representations present within a society and its consumption patterns. Cultural research has always focused on reporting *how* people feel and perceive things rather than *why*. It was acknowledged as a space for analyzing people's beliefs, feelings, and behaviors ¹⁵.

In the digital era, the culture is also subtracted from the digitization of information, finding value in the data collected. A core skill for the organizations which build their businesses on the usage of "big data," realigning their objectives, practices, and interests based on the information gathered. It has been the mark of radical changes in terms of online behavior ¹⁶. Big data insights demand to get all the data collected and then find essential links for the crucial information ¹⁷. The social and cultural elements influence how people adhere to

¹³ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 178.

¹⁴ de Mooij, 179.

¹⁵ WARC Best Practice, "What We Know about Cultural Insight," 1.

¹⁶ Pesce, Neirotti, and Paolucci, "When Culture Meets Digital Platforms: Value Creation and Stakeholders' Alignment in Big Data Use," 1.

¹⁷ Katal, Wazid, and Goudar, "Big Data: Issues, Challenges, Tools and Good Practices," 406.

the process of meaning conception for digital and diverse purposes. These practices are entailed by sharing ideas, thoughts, and text with the new digital world ¹⁸.

Cultural divergences have been the subject of numerous cross-cultural advertising research. Most of them have been founded in Western (mostly USA) – Eastern countries. The findings indicate that cultural disparities are the main barrier to brands adopting more standardized strategies. Nonetheless, many disregarded the role of foreign media and the readiness of standardized advertisements for particular target audiences ¹⁹. However, there are opinions in the literature that suggest that more research on the cultural similarities and differences that leave a mark on advertising is still necessary ²⁰.

Most advertising messages are conceived upon shared cultural values, creating coherent systems on which advertising leans. The global perspective implies that advertising should aim at finding and using unique cultural characteristics. These should appeal to the chosen nation and should echo the consumers' needs, tastes, and desires. Advertising promotes cultural values through numerous techniques, by connecting the products with the qualities viewed as "useful" in a society or employing photos to emphasize direct comparisons. It also illustrates the products and their users in adjoining connections, presenting glorified attributes ²¹.

A specific advertising stimulus will be perceived and evaluated differently, starting from the culture it finds itself in and depending on the *importance* the individuals offer it, as well as the

¹⁸ Domingo, "Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making," 8.

¹⁹ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 66.

²⁰ Taylor, "Moving International Advertising Research Forward: A New Research Agenda," 12.

²¹ Daechun, "Advertising Visuals in Global Brands' Local Websites: A Six-Country Comparison," 3.

level of assertiveness provided by the environment that surrounds an individual ²².

The “tradition” among advertising professionals from Western marketing has been to perceive all the countries and groups as culturally similar. They envisioned the image of the *universal consumer*. Most values are drafted abstractly, making them seem rather global. Nevertheless, in advertising, the motives must be concretely presented. And at that moment, the perceived *universality* of symbols, heroes, rituals, or values disappears ²³.

The consumers’ goods are an essential part of the consumers’ culture. The “social evil” image should be shed, as these products contribute to people’s efforts to define themselves and their lifestyle. Individuals are continually searching for meaning in their possessions. Thus, the cultural insight is rooted in understanding these meanings and needs, facilitating the movement of significance from the cultural artifact to the consumer ²⁴.

Notwithstanding, some authors indicate the fact that fast economic expansion and globalization are the main driving forces for the global trend towards individualism and the desire to adopt consumption conducts, which make them be perceived as distinctive ²⁵. The heterogeneities among countries motivate companies to conceive their marketing strategies on a “country-by-country” basis. However, culture has no fundamental effects in what concerns the product, price, place, and the process ²⁶. A paradox is formed, as globalization both enhances and weakens diversity ²⁷.

²² Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller, “The Cultural Dimension of Assertiveness in Cross-Cultural Advertising. The Perception and Evaluation of Assertive Advertising Appeals,” 370.

²³ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 181, 190.

²⁴ WARC Best Practice, “What We Know about Cultural Insight,” 2.

²⁵ Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, “Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union.”

²⁶ Phui and Yazdanifard, “Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing,” 43.

²⁷ Weijters, Puntoni, and Baumgartner, “Methodological Issues in Cross-Linguistic and Multilingual Advertising Research,” 2.

Individualism is noteworthy in the whole advertising landscape, as it has powerful social, political, and cultural implications. It is a value met in several kinds of research on the differentiation topic, as it is a "tradition" borrowed from the creators of Western civilization. It comes from cross-cultural study and is the compass of the cultural climate of a given country ²⁸.

The "cultural frictions" can produce unexpected, deep insight. Combining ethnographical elements and symbols, Danone discovered that in Mexico, the idea of "sheer sensual pleasure" was the winning ticket, not the "goodness" concept, which followed the French and American campaigns ²⁹.

The cultural dimensions are suffering from rapid changes. The digital tools can be used to capture cultural insights and transient cultural activity. They also permit "outsiders" to take advantage of the local "insider" knowledge ³⁰.

The cultural industries have strongly shifted towards digital endeavors, as the inherent complexity of the new environment, as well as the digitization of the entire content, encompasses strong economies that boost firms. These networks engage institutions from various fields such as tourism, education, research, and retail sectors ³¹.

1.1. THINKING GLOBAL

This discussion has its roots deep in the challenge advertisers face all over the world. They have to manage the global expansion, coupled with the internationalization of brands. And in an

²⁸ Pineda, Hernández-Santaolalla, and del Mar Rubio-Hernández, "Individualism in Western Advertising: A Comparative Study of Spanish and US Newspaper Advertisements," 438.

²⁹ WARC Best Practice, "What We Know about Cultural Insight," 3.

³⁰ WARC Best Practice, 3.

³¹ Pesce, Neirotti, and Paolucci, "When Culture Meets Digital Platforms: Value Creation and Stakeholders' Alignment in Big Data Use," 4.

increasingly global economy, in which the offers on the markets are more and more diversified, the skill of transferring ideas more than products across is paramount ³². As a consequence, the budgets are stretched, and the creative strategies must be reshaped to fit the broad array of cultural values and beliefs in different countries. The long-discussed existence of the "speak with a single voice" story puts advertisers in a predicament when conceiving brand-based campaigns that have to address audiences globally ³³. There are considerable heterogeneities between markets, even in the industrialized countries, which seem similar at first glance ³⁴.

The responses of consumers to the same advertisement differ in culturally consistent ways. This premise expands the need for localized and differentiated advertising. However, further studies pointed out that it is not so much the national heterogeneity, which affects the way the advertisements are perceived, as are the differences within the same country. Hence, advertisers should concentrate on key elements such as "homogenous segments" (and not the national markets as a whole) ³⁵.

International advertising is packed with concepts. A short review is necessary to understand the issue better. The first one is the overused term "Western countries". It is a gauge concept, mostly portraying high-quality products and services. The countries which are generally associated with this formula are North America and Western Europe, as well as Australia and New Zealand. The United States of America is holding the prototypical leading spot. Consumers

³² Andersen and Rask, "Creating Legitimacy across International Contexts: The Role of Storytelling for International New Ventures," 20.

³³ Hallahan, "Advertising," 8.

³⁴ Phui and Yazdanifard, "Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing," 43.

³⁵ Koslow and Costley, "How Consumer Heterogeneity Muddles the International Advertising Debate," 222-23.

from all over the world share attribute with *the West* through the consumption of Western cultural material ³⁶.

International communication has been placed at the top of the economic and commercial spectrum, as understanding the social valences of advertising messages- from the host markets to the comparison of various nations is a key to survival for many firms ³⁷. Everything is mass-produced, the local values are changing under the new influences, and the indigenous characteristics are facing disruption ³⁸.

The *Country of Origin* of a product has a significant impact on the perceived quality and purchase intention. It can alter the consumers' perception of the traits and the product, inferring the overall quality. Furthermore, it can have a powerful effect on "hedonic" characteristics such as design or prestige perception. Still, given the globalization effects, products have become multi-national, with many partial origins ³⁹.

The *brand globalness* is the availability and the accomplishment of a brand in multiple markets from different geographic regions. To properly position their products, many companies make use of the global consumer culture in their advertising ⁴⁰.

Advertising had to deal with differences in foreign environments, starting with the peculiarities of domestic settings. One encounters differences in the needs, desires, tastes of the consumers, as well as government policies and regulations, which may impair the brand's strategies for entering that market ⁴¹.

³⁶ Strebinger and Rusetski, "Prioritizing Geo-References: A Content Analysis of the Websites of Leading Global Luxury Fashion Brand," 3.

³⁷ Zhang, "Cultural Messages in International Advertisements," 273.

³⁸ Robertson, "Globalisation or Glocalisation?," 192.

³⁹ Strebinger and Rusetski, "Prioritizing Geo-References: A Content Analysis of the Websites of Leading Global Luxury Fashion Brand," 2.

⁴⁰ Strebinger and Rusetski, 3.

⁴¹ Akgün, Keskin, and Ayar, "Standardization and Adaptation of International Marketing Mix Activities: A Case Study," 610.

Along with all these challenges, the key pillars of the social-economical context must also be understood. The competition between companies has increased, as the trade policies are more liberalized than ever. The creation of regional economic integrations, the advances in transportation, the communication and information technologies that are highly digitalized, as well as the flow of goods have set the ground for the actual advertising mechanism ⁴². More than this, the consumers have sharpened their filters in terms of responding to advertisements. They are ready to respond at any moment to the bad behavior of a company, having activists and the media as allies and transforming their beliefs into actions when necessary ⁴³.

1.2. GLOCALIZATION IN ADVERTISING

Three significant aspects now characterize the history of global advertising. The first one is the “dilution” of Western domination in international advertising. The European companies acquired US-based large advertising companies, which propagated the expansion starting with the 1960s. Moreover, the “mega mergers” and all the acquisitions reshaped the dynamics of advertising agencies. The terms “advertising groups,” “advertising holding companies,” and “advertising organizations” became commonplace notions. Also, there is the expansion into less explored areas, such as the Asian countries, the Eastern European countries of the former Soviet Union. Their economic liberalization and cultural industries blooming have become attractive for the major players, as their

⁴² Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, “Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising,” 491.

⁴³ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, “Managing Global Brands to Meet Consumer Expectations,” 446.

markets were full of potential ⁴⁴. Beyond this, the European Union has always been a symbol of joint efforts and unity, a reason why many "foreign" firms tend to view Europe as a cohesive market and tend to conduct their business at a pan-European level ⁴⁵.

In terms of global marketing, we encounter the paradox of "think global, act locally." An individual who has his finger on the global pulse is still a product of his own culture ⁴⁶. This idea has also been sustained by ⁴⁷, who underlined that the transformations of society revolve around two significant cleavages: *globalization-identification* and *individualism-communalism*. It is worth considering the various forms these two adopt in the case of advertising messages. This phenomenon is augmented in the case of the youth, as it reacts to the global trends with localized versions of that culture ⁴⁸.

Many brands are present in multiple countries and multiple languages. It is essential to understand how the research findings depend on the word and the linguistic makeup of the sample ⁴⁹. The various meanings of an ad are molded by the individuals' socio-cultural background and the historical context, as well as by an "interpretive community," where members have common competencies in terms of interpreting the ad's message. Consumers display an affinity for the *entertainment* dimension of the advertisements, with a focus on the humorous and metaphorical influences, and strengthening the relationships between them and the brands ⁵⁰.

⁴⁴ Kim, "Research on Transnational Advertising Agencies. Management, Structure, and Entry Strategies," 80.

⁴⁵ Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, "Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union."

⁴⁶ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 46.

⁴⁷ Castells (2009)

⁴⁸ Kjeldgaard and Askegard, "The Glocalization of Youth Culture: The Global Youth Segment as Structures of Common Difference," 233.

⁴⁹ Weijters, Puntoni, and Baumgartner, "Methodological Issues in Cross-Linguistic and Multilingual Advertising Research," 2.

⁵⁰ Mohanty and Sahney, "Consumers' Message Orientation in Television Advertising and Branding: A Study on Indian Consumers."

The global brands are perceived as superior to the local ones, being symbols of cultural ideas and having a higher social status ⁵¹. They are also perceived as providing the best quality, in comparison to the local ones, even though that perception is not objective most of the time ^{52 53}.

The national markets' openness to the global movements should be considered, as the differences at a local level pertain even in the case of globalization. The differences relate to this label, also if one refers to it on a worldwide scale. According to Baker et al. (2007), seen at a global level, the countries split into the following categories, based on cultural flexibility:

Cultural individualists – countries that take great pride in their culture and combine it with individualistic values. The advertising strategies must actively focus on localization in their case ⁵⁴.

Global individualists – these are countries with a fragile interest in their culture and a vast openness to the international markets. Still, a lower need for localized strategies does not erase the need of the individual to connect with global brands ⁵⁵.

Global sensitives – this concept refers to the collectivist countries which are keen on connecting to the world. The availability of universal products is many times more meaningful to them than feelings of pride, reflecting their local culture ⁵⁶.

Cultural sensitives – it also designates collectivistic societies, yet it addresses those which revolve around their local cultures. They demand global brands to respect their culture and adapt to the local

⁵¹ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis."

⁵² De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, 3.

⁵³ Akaka and Alden, "Global Brand Positioning and Perceptions. International Advertising and Global Consumer Culture," 44.

⁵⁴ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, "Managing Global Brands to Meet Consumer Expectations," 452.

⁵⁵ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, 452.

⁵⁶ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, 452.

context, not only in terms of communication but also product characteristics ⁵⁷.

The joint presence of characteristics of *globalization*, as well as *localization*, led to the glocalized strategies, becoming a critical aspect for firms in the context of cross-cultural consumers ⁵⁸. The individuals view everything through the framework of their culture and search for similarities. Also, the more people know about other cultures, the more they become aware of their learning ⁵⁹.

1.3. CROSSROADS IN INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING

The advertising discourse is extremely intertextual. It often embraces references to cultural themes. It intertwines various texts in itself, being part of the broader social discourse people engage in every day, starting with their background up on the ladder, towards education ⁶⁰. More than this, it creates meaning through “allusion, metaphor, irony, analogy, and humor” ⁶¹.

Experts make use of intertextuality to provoke the readers to reflect and make link elements. It arouses impressions of familiarity and eases memorization. The first type of intertextuality is the *quotation*. It is based on recognition and full acceptance, aiding in appealingly achieving the advertising goal. The second is the *parody*. It is a means of generating new connotations by changing or taking fragments from the sources, adding, eluding some words, or combining them. The third type is an *allusion*. It reflects the idea by selecting keywords or phrases, putting aside the sources. It passes the task of connecting the ideated dots to the consumer ⁶².

⁵⁷ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, 452.

⁵⁸ Cyr, 2008 in Sutikno and Ming-Sung Cheng, “How Global Companies Communicate in Host Country: A Glocalization Strategy in Web Space,” 58.

⁵⁹ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 51.

⁶⁰ Danesi, “Advertising Discourse,” 3.

⁶¹ Danesi, 5.

⁶² Zantides, “Visual Metaphors in Communication: Intertextual Semiosis and Déjà Vu in Print Advertising,” 69–70.

Less developed nations view Western or US products as symbols of modernity and success ⁶³. Advertising itself often appeals to values that revolve around *economy, freedom, and success* ⁶⁴. Based on some studies, there are some characteristics prominent in certain societies. The American one thrives with *chaos* ⁶⁵. Also, their advertising is directly aimed at selling products, tendencies derived from the more explicit communication strategies ⁶⁶, and emphasized values such as *enjoyment, individualism, and economy* ⁶⁷.

The USA communicates more explicitly than other cultures. Advertising is generally pointed towards selling a product. Comparative advertising is a trademark for the country, being appreciated more in cultures that thrive on *individuality* ⁶⁸. Some studies, else ways, discuss a conceptual separation of American values from American products in the minds of global consumers ⁶⁹.

However, this does not apply to the Germans. They need highly structured mechanisms to function properly. Anyhow, when coupled with specific brand categories, such as automotive -having a strong bond with the national appeal- the Germans prove more receptive to emotions present in their advertisements. At the same time, Eastern European countries need an emphasis on the informative elements for the same category ⁷⁰.

⁶³ James and Hill, 1991 in Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 69.

⁶⁴ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 3.

⁶⁵ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 48.

⁶⁶ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 2.

⁶⁷ Zhang, "Cultural Messages in International Advertisements," 281.

⁶⁸ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 2.

⁶⁹ Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, "Managing Global Brands to Meet Consumer Expectations," 447.

⁷⁰ Hoffman and Wittig, "Adaptation of Advertisement Campaigns to Foreign Markets. A Content Analysis," 129.

The same contradictory principle applies to the USA, Eastern Europe, and Asian comparisons. In the West, *tradition* and *modernity* are two opposing terms, while in Japan, they go hand in hand ⁷¹. Eastern cultures are keener on being *sociable*, feeling uncomfortable in new and unexpected situations. Such “anxious” cultures have advertising which portrays more often elderly people. Although advertisers try to avoid this, it is a common practice in such cultures ⁷². In terms of positioning, the local-oriented approaches are of more significant effect in France than the global ones. These strategies work in nations such as France, as they are protecting their culture and language ⁷³. However, other groups of researchers suggest that much of the confusion over the effect of culture in advertising responses derive from treating the national cultures as monoliths instead of *mosaïques of groups* ⁷⁴.

The literature also suggests that insight obtained from the social sphere of non-Western contexts enriches the repertoire of international communication. The panoramic view of the communication repertoires could not be complete without the research and the results obtained from Eastern countries ⁷⁵.

The European countries are generally presented in comparison to the Western pole. This aspect is due to the partial evidence from the literature that suggested in the past decades that less developed countries are more prone to perceiving Western (and mostly the US) products as symbols of success and modernity ⁷⁶.

⁷¹ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 48.

⁷² Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, “Advertising, Cross-Cultural.,” 3.

⁷³ Nelson and Paek, “A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies,” 68.

⁷⁴ Koslow and Costley, “How Consumer Heterogeneity Muddles the International Advertising Debate,” 223.

⁷⁵ Brüggemann and Wessler, “Transnational Communication as Deliberation, Ritual, and Strategy,” 395.

⁷⁶ Nelson and Paek, “A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies,” 69.

Consumers from developing countries perceive products from evolved markets more favorably than the local ones ⁷⁷. Still, in the last ten years, there have been voices raising the issue of ambivalent attitudes towards US products and culture, pointing towards the preference of purchasing locally produced goods. The issue's complexity sheds light on the importance of examining advertisements across multiple countries simultaneously ⁷⁸.

In Europe, some stress there is a tendency for the individual to identify himself with his national and local identities, rather than the international trends ⁷⁹. And the brands that create a connection to the individual's home country generate more positive evaluations ⁸⁰. There is a cultural paradox worth noting in terms of global communication- a lot of countries show absolute cultural values yet are incredibly receptive to the ads presenting the exact opposite values ⁸¹.

As a whole, global advertisements used softer appeals, with less "literal" approaches, while portraying feelings of sophistication. The global executions marched on the idea of prestige and status improvement. For some, they are an essential symbol of quality, prestige and are generally preferred over local brands ⁸².

On the other hand, the local ones appeal to the consumers' taste for indigenous cultural values and feelings of nationalism ⁸³. It

⁷⁷ Busnaina and Woodall, "Doing Business in Libya: Assessing the Nature and Effectiveness of International Marketing Programs in an Evolving Economy," 4.

⁷⁸ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 69.

⁷⁹ Castells, *Communication Power*, 118.

⁸⁰ Liu & Johnson, 2005 in Rajabi et al., "Consumer Responses to Different Degrees of Advertising Adaptation: The Moderating Role of National Openness to Foreign Markets," 1.

⁸¹ de Mooij, 1998 in Koslow and Costley, "How Consumer Heterogeneity Muddles the International Advertising Debate," 222.

⁸² De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis," 1.

⁸³ Akaka and Alden, "Global Brand Positioning and Perceptions. International Advertising and Global Consumer Culture," 47.

leads to the integration of the broader phenomenon of *transnational communication*, which looks at the enduring powers of the national framework. It focuses on the aspects of public communication which cross borders and cultures. Communication does not only occur at an international level but also as an intersection between national entities ⁸⁴.

The main challenge for advertising is the fact executions are so numerous. They are very negligently perused, being necessary to find other mechanisms of gaining attention. The promise (and how it is formulated) and the eloquence of the advertisement, mark the border between *sublime* and *pathetic* ⁸⁵. Practitioners are advised to be cautious about employing extremely persuasive appeals in cultures where advertising acceptance has a low threshold. More appealing strategies involve presenting alternative benefits through the advertisement or grabbing attention with image creation ⁸⁶.

One shift in international advertising research is the relevance of linguistic issues. Most of the advertising research has been designed by North American scholars, having a “monolingual makeup”, which dominated the research proceedings. Both in academia and practice, there is an increasing preoccupation with the appeal of consumers from different countries who speak various languages. The goal is to identify the differences between multiple groups ⁸⁷. There is also the issue of culturally congruent and incongruent ads. The culturally incongruent ones are mostly perceived as being offensive. The ones which promote messages that resonate with the consumers' cultural values are generally more effective in terms of attitude towards those brands ⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ Brüggemanm and Wessler, “Transnational Communication as Deliberation, Ritual, and Strategy,” 395.

⁸⁵ Danesi, “Advertising Discourse,” 4.

⁸⁶ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, “Advertising, Cross-Cultural.,” 2.

⁸⁷ Weijters, Puntoni, and Baumgartner, “Methodological Issues in Cross-Linguistic and Multilingual Advertising Research,” 2.

⁸⁸ Mohanty and Sahney, “Consumers' Message Orientation in Television Advertising and Branding: A Study on Indian Consumers,” 2.

Nevertheless, among the many different attributes of an advertisement that may trigger the consumers' response, little attention has been given to the role of different languages. Most of the studies that saw daylight were preoccupied with language comparison, while consumers were native speakers of both of them. Paradoxically, although foreign languages are often used in advertising executions, there have not been too many attempts at researching consumers who speak that language at a lower proficiency level than native speakers. And in the case of Europe, albeit many foreign languages are being employed, the most frequent one is the English language ⁸⁹.

English is the most popular foreign language used in advertisements in several non-native English-speaking countries. Nevertheless, few are still known about mixed-language approaches ⁹⁰. The origin of language (in terms of local versus foreign issues) is a factor that impacts consumers' attention and comprehension of ad information. A foreign language can act as an unfamiliar stimulus that elicits attention, enhancing the probability of that material being better accepted and recalled by local consumers ⁹¹. Some findings pointed out that advertising agencies use the English language the most because it is presupposed that most of the target understands it and because it augments the image and the price of the product ⁹².

Some product categories prove to be successful if the same standardized approach is being used across countries. Two such examples are *alcohol* and *perfume*. *Beauty products* are more likely to be

⁸⁹ Gerritsen et al., "English in Product Advertisements in Non-English-Speaking Countries in Western Europe: Product Image and Comprehension of the Text," 350.

⁹⁰ Ahn and La Ferle, "Enhancing Recall and Recognition for Brand Names and Body Copy: A Mixed-Language Approach," 107.

⁹¹ Ahn and La Ferle, 108.

⁹² Gerritsen et al., "English in Product Advertisements in Non-English-Speaking Countries in Western Europe: Product Image and Comprehension of the Text," 350.

regulated than *automotive, food, or household goods*. Also, *technology products* are incredibly susceptible to being standardized ⁹³. Generally speaking, the products related to typical consumer behavior, like the hi-tech ones, usually have a standardized advertising message ⁹⁴. Added to this, now we have multiple technologies that allow advertisers to make use of various modes of presentation (visual, aesthetic, and narrative) for their advertising discourse, doubled by multiple media types ⁹⁵.

In terms of modern advertising, the picture is dominant. It can be especially seen in the international marketplace, where the focus is put on the unified global brands, and the brand images are increasingly standardized across countries. This tendency of actively using pictures derives from the desire to have executions that cross the language barriers. Some suggest that the lesser use of verbal anchoring derives from the consumers' experience and capacity of comprehending the visual figures ⁹⁶.

Regarding the texts, the main difference between the local and global ads has been formulated by Alden et al. in 1999 and reaffirmed in the work of ⁹⁷ a message with a "local-consumer culture" that focuses on the use of signs and symbols which refer to the particular culture and place of reference. Those who are part of the "global consumer culture" convey the meanings which are identified and recognized universally (p. 421) and influence society, beliefs, morals, ethics, and worldviews ⁹⁸. High awareness was recorded among the consumers who were exposed to the hybrid (global-local) approaches in communication. This strategy is proving to bring advantages both

⁹³ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 93.

⁹⁴ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 70.

⁹⁵ Danesi, "Advertising Discourse," 1.

⁹⁶ Philips and McQuarrie, "Visual Rhetoric in International Advertising," 238.

⁹⁷ Zarantonello, Schmitt, & Jedidi (2014)

⁹⁸ Danesi, "Advertising Discourse," 1.

in terms of *communication efficiency* (standardization), as well as *communication effectiveness* (differentiation) ⁹⁹.

There is also the case of advertisements without a copy. Non-verbal intertextual advertising has five categories that help illustrate the ideas in the absence of copy. The *cinematographic* type is the first one, as it borrows famous specific film scenes and transposes them into iconic images. The *artistic* type includes famous paintings, photographs, or excellent art images to create the illustration for the intertextual meaning. The *spatial* category adds references to prominent places and monuments as part of tourism campaigns or destination branding practices. The *literary* type implies using references to literature, as the illustration provides the context to the chosen narrative. *Advertising and graphic communication* are the most known. It indicates the usage of native advertising and explicit design material, deeply rooted in the popular visual culture ¹⁰⁰.

Looking at the bigger picture and taking into consideration the positioning elements of global brands, we identify several pillars. The *verbal* dimension (characterized by language), the *visual* aspect (the aesthetic style), and the *thematic* dimension (the story themes), through which a brand can associate with global and local consumers ¹⁰¹. All three dimensions shall be covered later in the book.

The importance of metaphor depiction has been long neglected in the literature. Beyond the copy dimension, regarding the visual aspects, the “representational deviation” has been long undervalued. The invitation for the consumer to uncover the hidden message meanings has not been a priority ¹⁰².

⁹⁹ Sutikno and Ming-Sung Cheng, “How Global Companies Communicate in Host Country: A Glocalization Strategy in Web Space,” 72.

¹⁰⁰ Zantides, “Visual Metaphors in Communication: Intertextual Semiosis and Déjà Vu in Print Advertising,” 72.

¹⁰¹ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, “Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis.,” 3.

¹⁰² Gkiouzepas and Hogg, “Articulating a New Framework for Visual Metaphors in Advertising,” 104.

Companies do not address the specific needs of the various target groups, failing to unleash the full potential of their executional ideas. They lack the basic guidelines which suggest when the peculiarities of their target groups should be considered ¹⁰³. Still, in most of today's advertising, the majority focuses on a single idea, with a generally sharp call to action, repeating the message across all the media to ensure its permeation in the agglomerated medium it sweeps through ¹⁰⁴.

Although global services and offers are booming, the research on the topic of international advertising is lagging. The literature proves to be in great need for empirical endeavors, with a more thorough analysis and a need for experimentation. Many scholars have underlined the fact that the research is in disproportion compared to the international services brands offer ¹⁰⁵. Less attention has been directed toward consumer research and how he/ she responds to different appeals. Previous studies revealed that judgment and choices are subjected not only to the promoted content but also to how it is communicated ¹⁰⁶.

The effects of positive versus negative advertising have been further developed in marketing communication research under the concept of "message framing". It has been operationalized through concentration on the positive product traits/ benefits of product usage or the disturbing aspects/ loss of profits from not using the product. Several factors are known to affect the consumer's response to advertising frames. Among these, one mentions social dimensions,

¹⁰³ Hoffman and Wittig, "Adaptation of Advertisement Campaigns to Foreign Markets. A Content Analysis," 117.

¹⁰⁴ Hallahan, "Advertising," 4.

¹⁰⁵ Kalso, Nelson, and Kitchen, "Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising," 492.

¹⁰⁶ Orth, Koenig, and Firbasova, "Cross-National Differences in Consumer Response to the Framing of Advertising Messages," 329.

including the national culture, personal experience, involvement, age, education, and perceived efficacy ¹⁰⁷.

Young consumers from global urban environments are keen on brands that are prosperous and globally accessible. These brands are symbols of *cosmopolitanism* and the global consumer culture. The most used geographical reference is the local ethnicity of the spokespersons illustrated in the advertisements, allowing consumers to better connect to the brand and the lifestyle of a particular area of the world ¹⁰⁸.

The success of the advertising message relies heavily on the type of appeal used. The *informational call* exposes the attributes or benefits of a product or service. In contrast, the *transformational request* brings forth benefits that are non-product-related or engage emotions (positive or negative), to raise the consumer's interest in the product or service ¹⁰⁹.

In terms of *likeability* and stirring attachment toward a particular brand, the messages with strong feelings and imagery arouse the consumers. In this respect, the message creators must incorporate elements such as humor, inspiration, or even fear and sadness, to enhance the message's chances of getting through. Also, though researchers still argue regarding the type of emotions that one should use in the advertising executions, they all meet halfway when it comes to the *unexpected* or the element of *surprise* ¹¹⁰.

1.4. CORE IDEAS FROM THE FIRST PART

This chapter presents a general overview of communication, interculturality, and trends in the advertising sphere. The first thing which the literature stresses is the increased pace in which the

¹⁰⁷ Orth, Koenig, and Firbasova, 329, 331.

¹⁰⁸ Strebing and Rusetski, "Prioritizing Geo-References: A Content Analysis of the Websites of Leading Global Luxury Fashion Brand," 1.

¹⁰⁹ Sharma and Kaur, "Modeling the Elements and Effects of Global Viral Advertising Content: A Cross-Cultural Framework," 2.

¹¹⁰ Sharma and Kaur, 3.

international advertising strategies had to adapt to the expansion of global cultures (while trying to preserve the local perspectives), as well as update their digital means and instruments (while maintaining the same level of quality of the messages). The experts faced new challenges of finding enriched perspectives for the continually evolving consumers, through the media outburst and all the technological absorption.

Small cultural cues can always be traced in advertising. Culture delineates groups within a society based on their preferences, professions, coupled with social aspects such as age and social class. And its manifestations are plentiful from the eating customs and patterns to the unique clothing characteristics, and dominant duties of people. The intersections appear in the groups which reveal the same levels of homogeneity for any of these traits. These are the ones exploited by advertising. However, deviant elements can also be an essential source of inspiration.

This is the starting point of what literature describes as *cultural insight*. Analyzing the social landscapes, the brands search for innuendos from the consumers, to deepen the relationship. The search for comprehending their behavior, as well as their consumption patterns, is, more than ever, a quintessential element. One of the crucial aspects which can be assumed from previous cultural research is that these focus on identifying *how* a situation or an element made the individuals feel, not so much on *why*. The perspective on the consumer and making him the central pillar has not been the preoccupation of most studies. Thus, many theoretical approximations led to various beliefs of their desires or perceptions without being attuned to them.

This chapter introduces the first concept employed later on in the analysis of *brand globalness*. To be able to define such a broad concept, the *perceived brand globalness* concept was employed. It was introduced in empirical studies by De Meulenaer, Dens, and De

Pelsmacker (2015), with a practical approach of how to determine the level of “globalness” of a brand. The concept can be revised in Figure 1. It reveals the expansion of a particular brand across multiple markets, as well as referring to the global consumer culture, through standardization, or differentiation.

It is one of the central elements of interest because of the “glocalization” that dictates the communication expressions of the past years. The “thinking globally while acting locally” incentive is appealing for many international brands. The global shifts and trends did not erase the consumers’ belonging to their own culture. And as open as he/ she is to international perspectives, the deeply rooted cultural characteristics follow the consumer in his advertising preferences, as well. Some studies ¹¹¹ suggest that in the case of youth, there is a high receptivity for global movements. However, they must have localized versions.

More and more research accentuates the need to consider the importance of language and how the linguistic assets of a specific group impact the reception of a message. Going back to the issue of culture, the multiple alternatives in which a consumer interprets an ad are always rooted in his socio-cultural background. It is the primary argument why propelling the same material across countries might not be a conquering solution. The intersections mentioned above of the cultural features of groups are essential, as they indicate the conventional capabilities of consumers of interpreting the ad’s message similarly. Also, the literature suggests another necessary aspect for the analysis, reminding the critical dimensions of entertainment and metaphorical significances. The latter will be of interest in the upcoming chapters.

¹¹¹ Kjeldgaard and Askegard, “The Glocalization of Youth Culture: The Global Youth Segment as Structures of Common Difference”; de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*.

Among other fundamental aspects mentioned is the perceived “superiority” of the global brands, compared to the local ones. It was suggested that the foreign brands are themselves viewed as “symbols of cultural ideas” and strengthen the consumer’s social prestige. There is also a distortion in the quality value they provide. The international brands will always benefit from increased recognition in terms of quality of products and services, while the local ones will be welcomed with a sort of reluctance.

There are essential techniques presented about various countries. Among the information bequeathed to new researchers, there are some distinctions envisioned between the American approaches and the European ones. It is underlined the fact that the USA tends to communicate more clearly and precisely than in other countries. Their advertising efforts are mostly put into selling the product, having a more pragmatic approach.

In Europe, however, there is a more pronounced tendency to connect to the local identities, leaving the international trends in a secondary position. And the global brands which manage to connect with the consumer on a personal level benefit from more positive assessments. Nonetheless, the consumer proves to act strangely and chaotically at times, the communication sphere making no exception. Previous studies refer to it as a “cultural paradox.” Many countries exhibit specific cultural values but do not falter to respond to advertisements that envision opposing values quickly.

Henceforth, in an extremely heterogeneous social landscape, the international brands tried using less “literal” ways, nuancing feelings more. They become symbols of reputation and social status. They are being in turn associated with high quality and chosen over the local ones. Despite this, the local brands still have the advantage of better knowing the consumers. They have the tempo of the indigenous culture, as well as national perceptions. This is also reflected in the transnational communication initiatives, where the

local public beliefs and desires cruise over the borders. It is a potent reminder that relevant communication does not merely take place at the international crossroads. It also has layers of local nature.

THE PERCEIVED BRAND GLOBALNESS

The *perceived brand globalness* is one of the first concepts used to define the global nature of a brand. The item is split into two indicators: *global positioning* and *local positioning* ¹¹². Under this concept, the ads are reviewed under the global standardization – local differentiation lenses. This concept is suitable for campaigns spanning multiple countries, but it can be employed for brands promoting similar products in multiple cultural contexts. As it is all subjected to context, the need for precise analysis elements is imposed.

The primary element that can be reviewed under this concept is the *copy*. Whether it preserves its original form across all the executions in each country, if it is translated, yet the same, or if a language mix is employed. The in-between positioning is necessary to mark the ads which use local, as well as international languages.

The same principle is applied to visual elements. It is important to note whether they are preserved the same across the campaign in other countries, or it is locally adapted.

The *logo* representation is part of the identity of the brand. It must be underlined from the beginning that logos rarely underwent fundamental changes. However, it is important to identify whether it preserves its original, global identity or is adapted to local appeals ¹¹³.

In terms of copy, the easiest way for a brand to acquire *international* status is to use the English language in its advertisements for the copy and the brand name. In contrast, for the local ones, most

¹¹² De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis."

¹¹³ Abdi and Irandoust, "The Importance of Advertising Slogans and Their Proper Designing in Brand Equity."

of the time, the brands make use of the local language. For a sounder analysis, it is also advised to add the "mixed positioning" category that reveals ads that use combined languages.

Regarding the aesthetic and visual dimensions, two recurrent categories are often preserved across countries: the spokespersons (international in terms of appearance or famous), and the brand logo. For localized ads, more internal representations are being used. Some traits of the spokespersons can be associated with local prototypes, while others reflect a global image ¹¹⁴.

¹¹⁴ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis."

PART 2

DIFFERENTIATION IN ADVERTISING

The wave of the globalized markets and their expansion put advertisers in front of a big dilemma- either to standardize international campaigns or to differentiate them according to each nation's specific ¹¹⁵. Research shows that different countries make use of differentiated advertisements. Yet, the question would be whether the ads' messages are the ones that need to be changed to be equally effective ¹¹⁶. Also, research interests in advertising's cultural consequences become stronger as advertising crosses multiple national borders ¹¹⁷.

The *standardization/ differentiation* dilemma surfaced. One cannot analyze *differentiation* techniques without counterbalancing the concept. Thus, we will shortly review the nuances of *standardization*, as well. The *linguistical standardization* ¹¹⁸ seems to be the last outpost of the former unifying strategies. Although international advertising standardization is widespread, the total uniformity of the message is the exception, not the rule ¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁵ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural."; Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, "Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union."

¹¹⁶ Koslow and Costley, "How Consumer Heterogeneity Muddles the International Advertising Debate," 222.

¹¹⁷ Zhang, "Cultural Messages in International Advertisements," 276.

¹¹⁸ Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, "Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads," 4.

¹¹⁹ Harris and Attour, "The International Advertising Practices of Multinational Companies: A Content Analysis Study," 156.

There is a strong urge to gain *legitimacy* in the markets. It is a quality that reflects appropriate actions in inappropriate socially constructed systems of norms ¹²⁰. There is a propensity among multinational companies use standardization more often than the local brands ¹²¹, to be able to enter the markets. It is a challenge for them, as the standardization approach is a natural choice, assuring a homogenous image worldwide. Yet, the local enduring cultural differences between nations threaten their penetration in the markets ¹²². The standardized approach brings the benefits of saving costs, maintaining a similar image of the brand on multiple markets ¹²³, as well as creating a uniform brand image and brand equity ¹²⁴.

Standardizing the brand name, the logo, packaging, positioning, and image facilitates awareness across various markets. Nonetheless, for a brand to be at the top of the global ladder, it should be adapted to differing consumer perceptions and values by demand. It should dwell on the local cultures and try solving local cultural issues, without losing its essence ¹²⁵.

For better positioning, the international brands try finding a place on the markets by referring to the rationale of consumers, by looking at how the brand differentiates itself in the consumers' mind: either by being part of the global consumer culture or the local consumer one. The main issue arises as previous studies have not yet

¹²⁰ Andersen and Rask, "Creating Legitimacy across International Contexts: The Role of Storytelling for International New Ventures," 5.

¹²¹ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 69.

¹²² Slangen and Dikova, "Planned Marketing Adaptation and Multinationals' Choices Between Acquisitions and Greenfields," 68.

¹²³ Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, "Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union"; Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, "Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads."

¹²⁴ Taylor, "Moving International Advertising Research Forward: A New Research Agenda," 11.

¹²⁵ WARC Best Practice, "What We Know about Cultural Insight," 2.

accounted for how much the consumer culture promoted by the brand complies with the consumers' view of the brand ¹²⁶.

2.1. DIFFERENTIATION VERSUS STANDARDIZATION

In the case of standardized tactics, the most accessible visual elements to standardize are the packaging and the *protagonist*. Using the same spokesperson across campaigns is an often-employed tactic, being prominent in the case of women's magazines' ads across Europe. In the case of language, the naming is often standardized, while the body copy is the least similar ¹²⁷.

Nevertheless, the supporters of standardization suggest that consumers' needs and requirements do not differ much across markets or nations, because the world becomes more similar in terms of demands ¹²⁸. Still, it has been shown that companies that opt for this do not necessarily perform better overall ¹²⁹. In a crowded advertising environment, the micro-executional elements are the ones that make a difference. Aspects like the spokesperson or the type of appeal can make a tremendous difference in terms of persuasiveness ¹³⁰. The differentiation-standardization issue has recently spread in digital media advertising, such as the Internet and mobile phones ¹³¹.

¹²⁶ Halkias et al., "Exploring the Effectiveness of Foreign Brand Communication: Consumer Culture Ad Imagery and Brand Schema Incongruity," 210.

¹²⁷ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 67.

¹²⁸ Phui and Yazdanifard, "Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing," 42.

¹²⁹ Schilke, Reimann, and Thomas, "When Does International Marketing Standardization Matter to Firm Performance?," 25.

¹³⁰ Burgers et al., "Making Ads Less Complex, yet More Creative and Persuasive: The Effects of Conventional Metaphors and Irony in Print Advertising," 515.

¹³¹ Liu et al., "Culture, Perceived Value, and Advertising Acceptance: A Cross-Cultural Study on Mobile Advertising," 2.

Many authors refer to *differentiation* in various ways. Some name it *adaptation* ¹³²; some prefer the term *localization* ¹³³. However, this process of tailoring the advertising messages to the local appeals implies creative processes. The literature spoke a lot about the opposition of *effectiveness* (in the case of standardization) and *creativity*, sustained by technological and artistic innovations, that also allowed researchers to break the barriers in cross-cultural advertising studies ¹³⁴. For a holistic coverage of its multiple valences, including the creative input, we will allude to it with one of the most recent denominations: *differentiation* ¹³⁵. The differentiation approach generates more creative advertisements than the standardized one, evoking higher purchase intentions and helping more favorable brand associations to be created ¹³⁶.

Advertisers subordinate their work to specific goals (e.g., attracting attention, creating the brand image, increasing purchase of intention, awareness, etc.), that must be adapted to the degree of advertising acceptance in various cultures ¹³⁷. Following this train of thought, some authors examined different types of advertising appeal. Two directions were addressed: *functional versus experiential advertisements* and *local versus global ads*. Within these, several subcategories of ads can be found.

The *practical ads* are the ones that include allusions to product characteristics and benefits that derive from them. The *experiential* ones evoke sensations, feelings, and ways of life. Functional

¹³² Harris and Attour, "The International Advertising Practices of Multinational Companies: A Content Analysis Study."

¹³³ Okazaki, Taylor, and Doh, "Market Convergence and Advertising Standardization in the European Union."

¹³⁴ Sasser, "International Advertising Creativity," 205.

¹³⁵ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 1.

¹³⁶ Mohanty and Sahney, "Consumers' Message Orientation in Television Advertising and Branding: A Study on Indian Consumers," 2.

¹³⁷ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 1.

advertising messages lead to cognitive responses from consumers, like *comprehension*. Their persuasion power is durable in new markets in which the consumer becomes acquainted with the benefits and traits of the product. At the other end of the spectrum are the experiential advertisements which stir the affect of the individuals and may produce mood changes and switch on their emotions. These are rather useful in mature markets in which consumers are accustomed to the solutions offered by the product and tend to consider as paramount the emotional aspects ¹³⁸.

The markets are subjected to the *network effects*, having an interconnected relationship with the brands, and having goods and services which affect third parties. The positive effects are felt in the case of standardization through the usage of resources by entering joint networks ¹³⁹.

The main issue concerning standardized patterns is how to set *a point of reference* in the analysis. What exactly are the "standards" one should be looking at when making a cross-country analysis? The copy could include either the region or the homeland of the companies in question. Thus, starting from the two pillars, the following categorization was conceived for those who want to develop a content analysis on advertisements (Table 1).

¹³⁸ Zarantonello, Schmitt, and Jedidi, "How to Advertise and Build Brand Knowledge Globally. Comparing Television Advertising Appeals Across Developed and Emerging Economies," 421, 422.

¹³⁹ Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity," 4.

Table 1. Standards of measurement for cross-country analysis
(Fastoso & Whitelock, 2010)

The basis for measurement	
<i>Ethnocentric</i>	The practices in the home market are used as a reference. In the content analysis, the authors recommend comparing ads for brands in the home country with those from the host markets.
<i>Regiocentric</i>	The geographic region is a unified entity, in terms of advertising criteria and external practices are excluded. For the content analysis, ads from a particular area are compared independently with methods from the country of origin.
<i>Geocentric</i>	Advertising practices are being compared all over the world at the same time. Advertisements from a broad range of countries are being compared with the brand's country of origin. The <i>geocentric approach</i> is the most employed one.

The degrees of differentiation can also be treated through the employed language, as it varies based on the extent of the ad localization. Most of them are directly translated from the original copy, disregarding the local specific values. In practice, the general approach in international advertising is that the overall strategy is standardized, the differentiation being noticed in the executions, and the change of language, where necessary ¹⁴⁰. Also, advertisements are rarely written in English in countries where English is not the mother tongue. Certain parts of the ad, such as the headline, subhead, or slogan, are left in English, while the body copy is often translated ¹⁴¹. However, the literature does not have abundant evidence to indicate whether the standardized ads using the English language are evaluated more positively than those in the local language ¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ Terlutter, Diehl, and Mueller, "The Cultural Dimension of Assertiveness in Cross-Cultural Advertising. The Perception and Evaluation of Assertive Advertising Appeals," 371.

¹⁴¹ Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies," 68.

¹⁴² Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, "Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads," 3.

Previous content analyses revealed that the copy of an advertisement (including the headline, the body copy, and the slogan) is the element that is mostly differentiated. They adapt it to the local culture ¹⁴³. Moreover, the manipulation of the slogan is utterly essential for relevance in the local market. The native language ads are more likely to give rise to a sense of belongingness and closeness ¹⁴⁴.

When discussing differentiation, the one who always sets the tune is the consumer. Differentiation is often an appanage of advertising creativity. Previous research shows that people oppose change. They fight the advertising claims which do not resonate with their experiences or do not provide enough facts ¹⁴⁵. It is why one of the most crucial adaptation strategies is appealing to the consumers' values, the enduring beliefs which set the mode of conduct in their existence ¹⁴⁶. Plus, firms should observe the national identity, language, tastes, and preferences of the audiences ¹⁴⁷. Those who support differentiation underline the difficulties in applying this approach and point out that the main drive is meeting market requirements ¹⁴⁸. Since the dawn of ¹⁴⁹ research, it has been suggested we are facing an increasing interest in the particular aspects of *advertising*, more specifically, how individuals infuse the advertising of specific companies with meanings and incorporate them into their lifestyles.

¹⁴³ Harris and Attour, "The International Advertising Practices of Multinational Companies: A Content Analysis Study."

¹⁴⁴ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis," 6.

¹⁴⁵ Hallahan, "Advertising," 8.

¹⁴⁶ Zhang, "Cultural Messages in International Advertisements," 274.

¹⁴⁷ Brei et al., "The Influence of Adaptation and Standardization of the Marketing Mix on Performance: A Meta-Analysis," 270.

¹⁴⁸ Phui and Yazdanifard, "Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing," 42.

¹⁴⁹ Daymon & Holloway's (2002)

In the attempt of differentiating a campaign, it is worth noting several factors, or contingency variables, according to Hoffman & Wittig (2007) that influence this process (Table 2). There are a couple of factors that compose them and challenge advertisers.

**Table 2. Variables essential in advertising research
(Hoffman & Wittig, 2007)**

<i>Country of destination</i>	It includes economic conditions, legal conditions, and competitive conditions
<i>Company</i>	It involves the corporate policy, and the home country
<i>Product</i>	Cultural bounding aspects and essential versus additional value

To better understand how the two dimensions (*standardization/ differentiation*) come into effect, it is also essential to look at the leading causes in terms of marketing mix activities and policies. This short overview has initially been put together by Nguyen (2011) and was later adopted by Akgün, Keskin, & Ayar (2014). We will focus on the promotional aspects, as they offer the best insight for the motivation of choosing one of the pillars. In terms of standardization, the main elements that shape it are improving efficiency and saving costs, increasing the brand's image, increasing customer trust/ loyalty, following the trend of globalization. Differentiation deals with pillars such as customer satisfaction, cultural differences, environmental factors such as political/ legal constraints (p. 612). Those who support the differentiation in execution indicate the difficulty of finding and satisfying the “unique cultural dimensions” in the international markets ¹⁵⁰.

¹⁵⁰ Nguyen, “Marketing Mix Across Cultures: Standardization or Adaptation | Case: Binh Quoi Tourist Village’s Wedding Services to French and Japanese Markets,” 27.

2.2. TAILORED ADVERTISING

Another aspect worth considering is *the tailoring of advertisements*. It is a strategy through which advertising messages are conceived to incorporate unique information about the recipients ¹⁵¹. It addresses the local consumer culture groups. These consist of individuals who have secure connections to the local traditions and customs are interested in the local events, and acknowledge the unique nature of local communities ¹⁵². Thus, the tailored message may address specific reasons for purchasing a product or adopting a behavior, accentuating the factors which are the most relevant to the consumer. It, in turn, influences the attitude and changes in response ¹⁵³.

The tailoring of advertising is crucial as absolute standardization is not a winning solution in the long run, as previously indicated. It can cause the collapse of a company by alienating it from the local market. When the distinct heterogeneous aspects of the consumers and their societies are acknowledged, the differentiation and adaptation of the message become the viable option ¹⁵⁴. It is illogical to pursue a complete process of standardization, except under particular settings (or specific product categories) ¹⁵⁵. Also, differentiation leaves room for nonconforming advertising, which seeks to target individuals who distinguish themselves from their own culture and other significant trends ¹⁵⁶. The global markets shift towards a regional approach entitled *strategic*

¹⁵¹ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 488.

¹⁵² De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis.," 2.

¹⁵³ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 490.

¹⁵⁴ Brei et al., "The Influence of Adaptation and Standardization of the Marketing Mix on Performance: A Meta-Analysis," 270.

¹⁵⁵ Phui and Yazdanifard, "Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing," 48.

¹⁵⁶ Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural.," 6.

regionalization. It is a comprehensive approach that is focused on geographical terms, coupled with local contrasts ¹⁵⁷.

Studies from the past decade have also slowly replaced the notion of *standardization* with a softer appeal: *similarity*. In terms of international advertising practices, one can rarely discuss identical methods. Rather than a mono-item, it has been slowly replaced by a multi-item construct: *degrees of similarities*. There were several layers to be considered, such as themes, budget, copy, or visuals ^{158 159}. After four decades of relentless debates, there is now a broad acceptance of the so-called “middle of the road” position ¹⁶⁰.

This transition has also been quoted in the literature as having missing links. Some writers choose to redefine standardization completely into *prototype* or *pattern standardization*. Under the *prototype standardization* umbrella, the international companies are obliged to use the same advertising message in the campaigns, the only acceptable differences being appropriate translations or idiomatic changes. The *pattern standardization*, however, implies that the drive is designed for multiple markets to use. In this respect, the campaign is conceived to provide uniformity in the thematic directions, not so much in detail. The outset for the development implies a single theme, yet the campaign executions allow various local market differentiation ¹⁶¹.

In terms of print advertising, advertisers have increasingly used the English language in their international campaigns’ materials. The print ads have not only used brand names, words, or slogans in English, having dual approaches but also many choose to

¹⁵⁷ Kim, “Research on Transnational Advertising Agencies. Management, Structure, and Entry Strategies,” 89.

¹⁵⁸ Fastoso and Whitelock, “Regionalization vs. Globalization in Advertising Research: Insights from Five Decades of Academic Study,” 33.

¹⁵⁹ Phui and Yazdanifard, “Comparison on the Impact of Standardization and Adaptation on International Marketing,” 46.

¹⁶⁰ Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, “Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising,” 491.

¹⁶¹ Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, 495.

communicate in English exclusively¹⁶². Using English ads in countries where English is not usually spoken determines the use of a standardized approach¹⁶³. It implies no changes regarding the headline, illustrations, or body copy, excluding the translations. A similar approach to international advertising is when no translation is performed (in an ad as a whole or a part of it, such as the slogan), and the advertisement is in a lingua franca. This maximal technique is applied because it saves translation and adaptation costs¹⁶⁴.

And the message tends to be clear and quickly permeates the consumers' attention. If the news is too difficult to understand, the reading and processing experience becomes dreadful. Consequently, if the comprehension process is also easy to attain, the consumer loses interest, as he/ she does not see the provoking aspects¹⁶⁵.

Nevertheless, the use of the English language has three motivations behind it. The first one is linked to linguistic reasoning. The primary motive is that a lot of products originate from the USA or the United Kingdom. It is coupled with possible incapacities in terms of describing the product in the target language, or the descriptive word is more complicated than the English denominator. And it is connected to the somewhat problematic choice between the formal and informal second-person pronoun. A second motif is that this is a global language, understood by a large segment of the population. However, the literature generally advises advertisers to make use of simple expressions. It also encourages the renouncement of colloquialism, in favor of visual aspects. The third aspect

¹⁶² Alvarez, Uribe, and De-La-Torre, "Should I Say It in English? Exploring Language Effects on Print Advertising among Latin American Bilinguals," 975.

¹⁶³ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*, 85.

¹⁶⁴ Gerritsen et al., "English in Product Advertisements in Non-English-Speaking Countries in Western Europe: Product Image and Comprehension of the Text," 351.

¹⁶⁵ Burgers et al., "Making Ads Less Complex, yet More Creative and Persuasive: The Effects of Conventional Metaphors and Irony in Print Advertising."

concerning the language choice is the product image. The English language can gather customers' attention and can be associated with the idea of modernity, sophistication, international trends, and prestige ¹⁶⁶.

One of the significant focuses of previous studies was on slogans and how they were received by the target audiences. The slogan might contribute to the construction or the reinforcement of the identity and position of the brand, as it conveys the meaning of the brand, together with what makes it unique and special ¹⁶⁷. Societies that are isolated from the global values and norms, either standardized or differentiated, accept less the patterned material than the completely adapted ads.

Consequently, societies with moderate openness to the foreign markets demand at least a connection to the cultural specificity of community, using glocalization or complete adaptation ¹⁶⁸. When a product reconciles universal needs, fewer differentiations are required, standardized patterns are being boosted ¹⁶⁹. And the societies that promote cultural integration and tolerance for foreign cultures are not influenced by the degree of advertisement adaptation ¹⁷⁰. The opener of international markets is the "be global, act local" formula ¹⁷¹. A brand that embraces glocalized advertising strategies is perceived as being closer to the consumer, as being part of his homeland

¹⁶⁶ Alvarez, Uribe, and De-La-Torre, "Should I Say It in English? Exploring Language Effects on Print Advertising among Latin American Bilinguals," 976.

¹⁶⁷ Silveira and Galvão, "Do Brands 'JUST DO IT?'. Studying the Effectiveness of B2C Slogans," 314.

¹⁶⁸ Rajabi et al., "Consumer Responses to Different Degrees of Advertising Adaptation: The Moderating Role of National Openness to Foreign Markets," 15.

¹⁶⁹ Busnaina and Woodall, "Doing Business in Libya: Assessing the Nature and Effectiveness of International Marketing Programs in an Evolving Economy," 3.

¹⁷⁰ Rajabi et al., "Consumer Responses to Different Degrees of Advertising Adaptation: The Moderating Role of National Openness to Foreign Markets," 15.

¹⁷¹ Busnaina and Woodall, "Doing Business in Libya: Assessing the Nature and Effectiveness of International Marketing Programs in an Evolving Economy," 2.

environment. It has the advantage of being seen as part of the consumers' culture, yet its universal availability boosts its image ¹⁷².

Such examples of industries that replicate domestic retail formulas across geographical markets are the fashion/ luxury retailers. Their success is dependent on the creation of an exclusive brand image, through similar store formats, product offerings, and advertising formulas. The general goal is not only to sell the products but also to create a dream and reinforce the brand value. Global positioning provides more substantial credibility, power, and value, ultimately leading to more powerful brand equity. Nevertheless, in the case of emerging markets, such as the Eastern European ones, these luxury brands must quickly adapt to the local market needs ¹⁷³. Companies mostly promote their products through country-based strategies, thus needing country-level factors to guide their decisions ¹⁷⁴.

2.3. FUNCTIONS OF ADVERTISING VISUALS

The preoccupation with the pictures and the symbols used in advertisements has attracted research interests. The language and textual dimensions were the main focus in terms of advertisements' degree of sophistication. Nonetheless, many researchers identified during the years the potential of the visual elements and are aware of the objectives that can be achieved, such as *belief acceptance* and *change* ¹⁷⁵.

Some categories of brands, such as the luxury ones, focus firmly on visual cues. Some studies confirm the sovereignty of the visual dimension. Consumers understand more quickly the advertisers' intended meanings from the visual cues rather than the

¹⁷² Baker, Sterenberg, and Taylor, "Managing Global Brands to Meet Consumer Expectations," 450.

¹⁷³ Liu et al., "The Standardization-Localization Dilemma of Brand Communications for Luxury Fashion Retailers' Internationalization into China," 2.

¹⁷⁴ Rajabi et al., "Consumer Responses to Different Degrees of Advertising Adaptation: The Moderating Role of National Openness to Foreign Markets," 2.

¹⁷⁵ Toncar and Fetscherin, "A Study of Visual Puffery in Fragrance Advertising," 53.

verbal ones. The researchers hypothesize that those verbal figures are transposed into a mental image during the perception of an ad. The visual value, on the other hand, shortens this process, the junction of significance being already made. It simplifies cognitive refinement, boosting the overall comprehension of the message ¹⁷⁶.

These cues are used to reveal the product's attributes, outline the identity of a product, and link it to specific symbols and lifestyles. The elements of visual stimuli in advertising impact the viewer's reactions. These are the size of the picture, the exposure, the duration, and the repeated sequences of exposure. The most substantial effect is obtained when coupling it with the *textual message*. It makes the visual appeal the paramount element of the advertising message ¹⁷⁷.

The visual figures disclosed to the consumer generate multiple interpretations at the moment of exposure. On the other hand, the verbal formulas produce descriptions only when some time of reflection has been allocated. The visual cues have several advantages in the real world, as consumers are not willing to deeply reflect on most of the ads they come across. The visual aspects lead to a deeper amplification, impromptu reasoning, and a better conception than the verbal ones ¹⁷⁸.

Looking at various methodologies, the two focal points in the visual analysis were the *visual hyperbole* and the *visual metaphor*. There were also associations made between the copy and visual elements. Combinations between *verbal rhetoric* and *visual cues* are exercised. This is done to holistically understand their effects in an advertisement. These efforts are doubled by several theories attempting to illustrate the impact of visual elements in advertising (the visual and verbal loop theory; the attitude towards the ad; the

¹⁷⁶ Philips and McQuarrie, "Visual Rhetoric in International Advertising," 239.

¹⁷⁷ Daechun, "Advertising Visuals in Global Brands' Local Websites: A Six-Country Comparison," 3.

¹⁷⁸ Philips and McQuarrie, "Visual Rhetoric in International Advertising," 240.

affect-transfer approach; the information processing theory; the elaboration-likelihood model) ¹⁷⁹.

The *metaphor*, in its raw sense, implies that two phenomena that are part of two distinct categories are depicted as one, identifying which of the source's attributes are transposed onto the target ¹⁸⁰.

The unexpected associations and formulas are recommended for advertising executions, as the consumer relishes solving "the puzzle" of a visual metaphor in an ad. The implementations should not make use of utterly distinct formulas. The consumer should be engaged. Such satisfaction in deciphering the visible figures leads to positive attitudes towards the ad and the brand. The executions are highly appreciated if they are bright, appropriate, and insightful ¹⁸¹.

The concept of visual metaphor has been actively cultivated, especially in the print advertising section. A proper understanding of the metaphor implies that the product or the brand is recognized in the first place. If the design or the logo is unique and discernible, the sole depiction is enough for identification. The product name is, at times, signaled verbally, as well as visually ¹⁸².

The pictorial metaphor in static advertising executions embraces various types such as hybrid metaphor, contextual metaphor, striking simile, and mixed metaphor. The *hybrid metaphor* illustrates a unified object which is built up of two different items, belonging to different domains. The *contextual metaphor* depicts a unified object which is understood by having an unexpected role in the visual context in which it is put. A *striking simile* is a unified object opposed to an object belonging to another category in a manner that

¹⁷⁹ Toncar and Fetscherin, "A Study of Visual Puffery in Fragrance Advertising," 54.

¹⁸⁰ Zantides, "Visual Metaphors in Communication: Intertextual Semiosis and Déjà Vu in Print Advertising," 66.

¹⁸¹ Philips and McQuarrie, "Visual Rhetoric in International Advertising," 240.

¹⁸² Zantides, "Visual Metaphors in Communication: Intertextual Semiosis and Déjà Vu in Print Advertising," 67.

makes the first object understood by viewing the second. The last is the *mixed metaphor*, presenting a unified object which resembles another one, even if the contextual elements are missing ¹⁸³.

There were two approaches developed to researching and analyzing visual elements. One is collecting a large sample of advertisements and using content analysis to examine the frequency of visual elements. The other one expands the "reader-response" technique, revealing the meanings consumers distill from the ads ¹⁸⁴.

2.4. CORE IDEAS FROM THE SECOND PART

This chapter is dedicated to the conceptualization of *differentiation* and its subsequent constructs. To better understand its meaning and implications, it is put in opposition to *standardization*. Previous studies evoke the outdated nature of standardization in the present communicational landscape, as the preservation of the same copy sections remained the sole strategy for the brands still using this tactic. As international advertising comes face to face with local cultures, maintaining the same message becomes, as the literature suggests, the exception.

Because of its multiple valences, many studies struggled to find the proper name for the differentiation. The evolution of concept was a witness of concepts such as adaptation or localization. Nevertheless, when the creative potential was felt, many authors converged toward the same modern approach and named its standardization. Interestingly, many studies that treat the current acceptance of this concept also tie it to artistic and technological additions. They reinforce the flexibility and pervasiveness of the construct.

¹⁸³ Zantides, 68.

¹⁸⁴ Toncar and Fetscherin, "A Study of Visual Puffery in Fragrance Advertising," 54.

The main trouble with standardization is that it takes the original copy, translates it, and promotes it in this manner, obliterating the cultural specifics. For many years it was perceived as a time and cost-effective approach. However, in time, the brands that focus on sparing the money for those campaigns have lost significantly more compared to their competitors that listen to the consumers' desires. It is also suggested that print advertisements are rarely written in English in countries in which there are no native speakers. The countries aspiring to global values leave the headline or the slogan in English, while the rest of the copy is different. An important observation is that literature does not have sufficient evidence to state that the ads in the English language are more appreciated than those in the local one.

The previous research that uses content analysis suggests that the copy of print ads is the most differentiated element. Also, it is the one that adds the local culture touch. The use of the local language stirs feelings of closeness in consumers to their local culture. Among all the elements of the copy, the slogan comes out as being the decisive element in the market.

There are no recipes for the conception of a good ad. There are individual tracks that prove to be a good alternative. One of these is the full adaptation of the copy. Based on the insights of the social environment, the literature proposes differentiating the message according to countries – many invest energy into researching how the slogan is perceived by the audience. Being a carrier of a quintessential promise of the brand increases the positive perception of the brand's identity.

As standardization is increasingly viewed as a losing alternative, the literature proposes the *tailored advertising* term to embody its most prominent features. The independence and influence of the consumer are translated into trends that he sets and subjects he wants to see treated in the public sphere. Starting from here, some of

the international brands try having a global approach, followed by local and even regional personalization.

Nevertheless, some authors forewarn not to demonize standardization completely. Even if it ultimately drowns a brand's strategy, there are specific particular contexts and product categories in which this strategy is welcomed. The literature, however, tends to seek mechanisms of gently eluding this construct.

In many recent studies, this concept is interchanged with *similarity*. The professionals began dissociating themselves from similar executions. Hence, the current approach is using a multi-item construct named *degrees of similarities*. It is a multiple concept, as it considered several aspects of a campaign conception, such as central theme, copy, visual elements, and budget. This chapter reinforced an additional construct: *ad metaphors*. These are essential in understanding how concepts are differentiated in print advertising. A guide to the classification and most essential information about ad metaphors can be viewed below.

THE VISUAL AD METAPHORS (SCENARIOS)

The *visual metaphor* is a construct related to print advertising embodying two distinct ideas. One conceptualizes the other, the reader being able to make an analogical comparison between the two. The visual metaphor unifies the two ideas' meaning figuratively^{185 186}. The ads embodying it can be split into *congruent* and *incongruent* ads.

The *incongruent ads* are the ones containing unexpected visual elements that depict the source and the target, with "artful deviations" of the modes of writing and illustrating. Those ads represent novel,

¹⁸⁵ Mohanty and Ratneshwar, "Visual Metaphors in Ads: The Inverted-U Effects of Incongruity on Processing Pleasure and Ad Effectiveness."

¹⁸⁶ Kao, Wu, and Yu, "The Impact of Construal Level on Brand Preferences: Ad Metaphors and Brand Biography as Moderators," 53.

surprising, and complex elements that stir the consumer's arousal ¹⁸⁷. The ads comprise a compelling proposal to complete richly textured communication, adding a layer of more vivid understanding. The metaphors used in ads are more likely to awaken an experiential response in the listener than the mere portraying of a quality. When used in text or images in advertisements, these metaphors are considered rhetorical figures, being abstract and experience-based. There is always the chance of subjective interpretation ¹⁸⁸.

The *object's mode of representation* is another dimension included in the visual rhetoric. It reveals what is being related, illustrating significant distinctions in terms of representations. The two dimensions comprised by this concept are *juxtaposition* and *synthesis*. The *juxtaposition* in the ad implies envisioning the product and its qualities in their entirety, while the *synthesis* reveals products or traits partially illustrated, giving the consumer the necessary cues to identify the object.

The visual metaphors embody three different types of scenarios illustrated in print advertisements. The scenarios are proposed by Gkiouzepas and Hogg (2013).

<i>The realistic symbiosis</i>	It points towards an unusual view of life, with metaphorical implications. It brings forth unexpected similarities in terms of colors, position, or angle view between the product and another critical element of the ad.
<i>The replacement</i>	It refers to products that have been replaced by objects foreign to the general ad layout. The "intruder" is an object unlikely to appear in the typical setting presented by the ad.

¹⁸⁷ Mohanty and Ratneshwar, "Visual Metaphors in Ads: The Inverted-U Effects of Incongruity on Processing Pleasure and Ad Effectiveness," 446.

¹⁸⁸ Kao, Wu, and Yu, "The Impact of Construal Level on Brand Preferences: Ad Metaphors and Brand Biography as Moderators," 53.

*The artificial
symbiosis*

It is found in visuals where the focal objects are placed within the same visual space, without either of them being unified by a real-life visual scenario. The artificial nature is set from the outset. The same is applicable for the inclusion of two or more objects that form a single, hybrid one.

PART 3

ADVERTISING AND PLATFORMS

As this subject addresses the issue of print ads in the digital format that has been part of most digital campaigns, it is necessary to dedicate an individual chapter to the digital advances the advertising and communication processes have faced during the last years. Especially since the conception of these print ads has been subjected to new rules and directions imposed by changes in the online environments.

The past decade registered a high potency in the spread of these international messages, as individuals came face-to-face with the *platformization* phenomenon¹⁸⁹. The infrastructural and economic extensions, doubled by the digital platforms, led to the extremely complex web ecosystem, with far-reaching cultural implications and many insights derived from it¹⁹⁰. The rise of platforms, also known as *digital intermediaries*¹⁹¹, is the infrastructural and prevalent economic model of the social web, drawing numerous consequences into how information is digitally transposed¹⁹².

The public and the private sphere have intertwined in the online landscape, having sprung as spheres of information and symbolic content. They are disjoined from the physical venues and

¹⁸⁹ van Dijck, Poell, and De Wall, *The Platform Society. Public Values in a Connective World*.

¹⁹⁰ Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity," 2.

¹⁹¹ Dal, *Digital Platforms, Imperialism and Political Culture*, 178.

¹⁹² Helmond, "The Platformization of the Web: Making Web Data Platform Ready," 1.

strongly linked to the evolving technologies of communication. In the ever-evolving social, cultural, and technological landscape, *privacy* advanced from a static approach to a dynamic one. Several theories try to tackle this issue.

A *platform* represents a core of networks that produces "collective, combinatorial, and decentralized innovations," tracking future market opportunities and channeling external creativity¹⁹³. The digital platforms have initiated a new mode of producing content, distributing it, and monetizing it. The content production cycle starts from selecting trending topics on social media and popular search terms, doubled by the calculation of the production costs, the traffic, and advertising sponsorship revenue potential of the issue, as well as the format. After the content is delivered, the users are brought together by posting, promoting, and advertising content via an extensive spectrum of social platforms¹⁹⁴.

The *platform studies* are centered around the characteristics of content-sharing websites and social media applications. Among the key features, we mention: "programmability, affordance and constraints, the connection of heterogeneous actors, and accessibility of data"¹⁹⁵. Platforms represent a potent model for the innovation of products, having straight functions in digital media¹⁹⁶. They also developed a more conceptual acceptance, as representing the basis of an action or condition. The material "platform" for the environmental industries has been transposed into a metaphysical meaning of favorable junctures and insight¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹³ De Falco et al., "Open Collaborative Innovation and Digital Platforms," 1347.

¹⁹⁴ Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity," 2.

¹⁹⁵ Plantin et al., "Infrastructure Studies Meet Platform Studies in the Age of Google and Facebook," 294.

¹⁹⁶ Plantin et al., 294.

¹⁹⁷ Gillespie, "The Politics of 'Platforms,'" 350.

Platforms conceived an entirely novel prototype of competition. One that challenged every ecosystem and brought them in a direct clash. The digital environment is revolutionized with the departure from the ideal products and service competition to the platform-based one.

Many industries have been rejuvenated by changes in the product” packetization,” services, and activities. The software became embedded in many things, and mundane objects became the subject of everyday networking. This phenomenon also requires specialization in several aspects, infusing the attributes of the software niche into the former “nontechnological industries” ¹⁹⁸. The platforms are conceived in such a way to be developed and extended by collaborating parties. It is provided that those parties follow the regulations of the platform ¹⁹⁹.

In the era of global connections, the platforms gain significant importance, as they assure capital accumulation, transforming them into the most critical technologies in the digital economy and culture. Multiple countries, developed and developing, conceived their platforms such as social networking sites, and started competing with each other at a global level ²⁰⁰. Plus, platforms proved extremely valuable for both digital and non-digital industries ²⁰¹.

The” do-it-yourself” customs have even spread to advertising and become a common phenomenon, especially since advertising on search engines such as Google or social media platforms is such a powerful tool. The digital sector furnishes these technological platforms, playing an essential part in the network of firms and

¹⁹⁸ Tiwana, *Platform Ecosystems Aligning Architecture, Governance, and Strategy*, 3.

¹⁹⁹ Plantin et al., “Infrastructure Studies Meet Platform Studies in the Age of Google and Facebook,” 298.

²⁰⁰ Dal, *Digital Platforms, Imperialism and Political Culture*, 178.

²⁰¹ Plantin et al., “Infrastructure Studies Meet Platform Studies in the Age of Google and Facebook,” 296.

developers that are commonly named "platform innovation ecosystem"²⁰². The governance of these platforms consists of established restrictions and policies, together with informal meetings to debate the optimal way of organizing the information²⁰³.

The platforms each have their structures that allow brands to upload their copy and desired visual materials. The payments scheme has also been simplified, allowing the advertisers to complete their tasks with a simple credit card²⁰⁴. The focus of the buying firms is on quantitative analyses conducted through computers, which aim at identifying fragmented media audiences which serve as the testing environment for the ubiquitous digital media²⁰⁵.

3.1. PLATFORM OUTBURST

This issue is absorbed by a particular type of digital service: *advertising platforms*. These are the first endeavors of creating an adequate model in the digital age. They are the fosterers of the most recent technological trends. Web 2.0. is a rampage for their emergence, as the premises is a boom in the user-generated content and the multimedia interfaces. The users became "laborers" who started producing data and content, which is, in turn, managed by the companies that sold them to advertisers and other actors²⁰⁶.

The platformization embodies the increase of social media platforms into the rest of the internet, making the external web data "platform ready". The "platform" denomination has become the dominant concept of the social media companies for positioning

²⁰² Gawer, "Bridging Differing Perspectives on Technological Platforms: Toward an Integrative Framework," 1239.

²⁰³ Greene and Shilton, "Platform Privacies: Governance, Collaboration, and the Different Meanings of 'Privacy' in IOS and Android Development," 3.

²⁰⁴ Hallahan, "Advertising," 2.

²⁰⁵ Couldry and Turow, "Advertising, Big Data, and the Clearance of the Public Realm: Marketers' New Approaches to the Content Subsidy," 1714.

²⁰⁶ Srnicek, *Platform Capitalism*, 49, 52.

themselves on the market and focusing on the consumers ²⁰⁷. Thus, platforms have become a new tool for the corporate sphere, as well. Their global use has risen the impression of overall wealth and the breakthrough capabilities of today's societies ²⁰⁸.

The social networks can be designated in two ways: the first is in the context of systems especially conceived for social interactions or other services, such as content sharing, for a broad level of social interaction. The nodes consist of actors, and the edges are defined by relationships and interactions between actors ²⁰⁹.

These platforms have a consistent role in coordinating agents that can innovate, create value by supporting products and services in demand in economies, sketch a new technological architecture. The theory that addresses this phenomenon has been entitled "two-sided markets," "multi-sided markets," or "multi-sided platforms," as it portrays the "network effects" that appear between two sides of the market. The network effect generates a self-reinforcing feedback loop that brings certain advantages and encourages competition between platforms on the "winner takes it all" principle. The value of the platforms derives from the access of "one" to the "other side" of the platform, the issue revolving around how to bring different parties together ²¹⁰.

One must also discuss what is *not* a platform. A real platform must be at least two-sided and include two distinct groups- such as the app developers and the end-users- connecting through the synergy of the platform use ²¹¹. Adding to this, social media companies utilize the term "platform" to position themselves as

²⁰⁷ Helmond, "The Platformization of the Web: Making Web Data Platform Ready," 2.

²⁰⁸ Dal, *Digital Platforms, Imperialism and Political Culture*, 186.

²⁰⁹ Aggarwal, *An Introduction to Social Network Data Analytics*, 2.

²¹⁰ Gawer, "Bridging Differing Perspectives on Technological Platforms: Toward an Integrative Framework," 1240-41.

²¹¹ Tiwana, *Platform Ecosystems Aligning Architecture, Governance, and Strategy*, 21.

neutral facilitators. It is specific enough to mean something, yet sufficiently equivocal to function across multiple venues for several target groups ²¹².

It has been revealed that the higher the number of users a platform has, the more prominent will the incentive be for developers to conceive supplementary, complementary products ²¹³. The platforms have a cooperative nature, as publishers and platforms cooperate simultaneously for the distribution of content and strive for advertising interest ²¹⁴.

Tailoring of the advertisement strategy is used to individually target consumers by matching the advertising messages to the preferences of the target group. It has been adopted as an essential component of online advertising strategies, including programmatic advertising. It is necessary for the field of cross-national studies ²¹⁵. The literature requires studying tailored advertising in cross-national studies, as companies seek to reach consumers all around the globe. It is necessary to understand what differentiates the strategies and what is useful in the new media advertising context ²¹⁶.

The advertisers have moved away from the "traditional approaches" to the media environments (newspapers, magazines, television) to contact target audiences that gather on the digital platforms. Technology allowed reaching consumers with advertising messages in the optimal locations, as the digital environments are

²¹² Gillespie, "The Politics of 'Platforms,'" 348.

²¹³ McIntyre and Srinivasan, "Networks, Platforms, and Strategy: Emerging Views and Next Steps," 9.

²¹⁴ Nechushtai, "Could Digital Platforms Capture the Media through Infrastructure?," 2.

²¹⁵ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 487.

²¹⁶ Liu et al., "The Standardization-Localization Dilemma of Brand Communications for Luxury Fashion Retailers' Internationalization into China," 488.

conceived to fit the consumers' interests ²¹⁷. *Deep personalization* is a term often found in the digital era, as it designates selections of information and material based on the significant data-generated assumptions about where they prefer focusing their attention. The platforms continuously collect information about their users, from their searches to location, and preferences reflected by previous queries, providing the necessary data upon which the platforms personalize and deliver their services to the customers ²¹⁸. This criterion is unknown to them ²¹⁹. Platforms can block, promote, and edit the content they host ²²⁰.

The massive expansion of content and the search engines such as social media sites set the ground for fierce competition to catch the audience's attention ²²¹. There are several mining techniques used for the abundance of data gathered from social networks. These techniques allow for the analysis of big, complex, and dynamic data ²²².

Social media platforms, for instance, are the ones that unite the communicative acts to the economic logic. Functions such as *like*, *share*, or *retweet* does more than provide the means of expressing one's opinion. They also ease ranking, bring forth product recommendations, and offer a thorough base of data analytics. In the literature, these double functions appear under the denomination of *double articulations* ²²³. These platforms are designed to sales pitch the content

²¹⁷ Couldry and Turow, "Advertising, Big Data, and the Clearance of the Public Realm: Marketers' New Approaches to the Content Subsidy," 1710.

²¹⁸ Gawer, "Bridging Differing Perspectives on Technological Platforms: Toward an Integrative Framework," 1243.

²¹⁹ Couldry and Turow, "Advertising, Big Data, and the Clearance of the Public Realm: Marketers' New Approaches to the Content Subsidy," 1712.

²²⁰ Greene and Shilton, "Platform Privacies: Governance, Collaboration, and the Different Meanings of 'Privacy' in IOS and Android Development," 4.

²²¹ Couldry and Turow, "Advertising, Big Data, and the Clearance of the Public Realm: Marketers' New Approaches to the Content Subsidy," 1715.

²²² Aggarwal, *An Introduction to Social Network Data Analytics*, 12.

²²³ Plantin et al., "Infrastructure Studies Meet Platform Studies in the Age of Google and Facebook," 297.

gradually they host while reconciling opposing aspects in their services: user-generated content versus the commercially-produced, growing communities while bestowing advertising, meddling in the deliveries of content versus remaining neutral ²²⁴.

The tailoring process appeared from the need to create a unique advertisement that could grab the attention of the consumer in a highly crowded media environment. These advertisements are based on the information individuals provide and are shaped according to their interests, preferences, and characteristics, collected through data mining of transactions, the behavior exuded in online shopping or even surveys. The online platforms allow for the message to be more persuasively constructed based on the consumer's demographics, values, beliefs, and lifestyle. The "matching component" is finely tuned into the needs of the recipients ²²⁵. Many companies have accepted the chances offered by the expansion of social media, consistently collaborating with search engine and social media optimization, to ensure audience engagement and growth ²²⁶.

These practices are intricately linked to cultural commodities and cultural production, as well. In the research on digital platforms, the relationship with cultural commodities is portrayed in two ways. The first one presents cultural production as being dependent on a group of powerful digital platforms (*platform dependence*). The products and services are offered through these platforms and are malleable, and informed through datafied user feedback ²²⁷.

The literature proposes some useful information on how advertising on digital platforms becomes more active. The first one is

²²⁴ Gillespie, "The Politics of 'Platforms,'" 348.

²²⁵ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 489.

²²⁶ Nielsen and Ganter, "Dealing with Digital Intermediaries: A Case Study of the Relations between Publishers and Platforms," 2.

²²⁷ Nieborg and Poell, "The Platformization of Cultural Production: Theorizing the Contingent Cultural Commodity," 2.

the degree of involvement. It is higher if the message is relevant to the consumers. The second attribute is *perceived relevance*. It illustrates the importance the recipient grants the news, based on the amount of personal information the ad entails. The effectiveness is also influenced by *the favorability of the thoughts* induced by the advertisement. An execution that invites the recipient to think about its meanings is more memorable. The last aspect is linked to the *skepticism* of the consumer. It mediates the exposure and the response to advertisements. The receivers use *persuasion knowledge* to identify the contexts in which they should be skeptical ²²⁸.

3.2. RHETORIC OF CONNECTIVITY

To bypass all this, social networks (such as Facebook) have developed effective mechanisms in the new "Like economy." These social platforms use the rhetoric of *sociality* and *connectivity* to create the proper infrastructure for the consumer. Social interactivity is a tool for collecting users' data and entering the sphere of exchange. The online social aspects are of particular economic value because the users' connections are transposed into comparable sets of data. It is, in turn, presented to other users in a manner that generates more traffic and engagement. The existence of these features makes connections between multiple websites and platforms, thus expanding beyond the traditional "hyperlink". The involvement of the user is measured in a centralized, data-intensified infrastructure ²²⁹.

In the examination of the broadening role of social media, researchers identified several other functions. Being digital "intermediaries" at times, they are envisioned as the new guards of access to content. They are essential in the distribution and

²²⁸ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 491.

²²⁹ Gerlitz and Helmond, "The like Economy: Social Buttons and the Data-Intensive Web," 1349.

monetization of information ²³⁰. The "digital intermediaries" are companies such as Google or Facebook that hold a central position in the digital media environment ²³¹. The platforms are a description of the online content services of these intermediaries for the sizeable public discourse of users ²³². Their flourishing importance has changed the digital landscape, as individuals retrieve their news through the dominant networking sites and the leading search engine. At the same time, advertisers opt for their services to obtain cheaper, targeted advertising ²³³.

There is now a solid understanding of the theoretical implications of how platforms coordinate the value network among various parties. Nonetheless, there are few aspects known regarding how the convergence of interests is accomplished among actors that contribute to the platform with their types of content ²³⁴.

The hyperlink era began when Google founders designed a unique algorithm that counted the importance and ranking of a page in a framework of numerous pages, based on the number of links and pages linking to it. In this manner, it was determined that not all websites and platforms are of equal value, their authority becoming directly proportional to the inlinks they had ²³⁵. The social web's outburst initiated when the validation of the web content progressively shifted to different other users. The "Web 2.0" era allowed the establishment of new connections between users and

²³⁰ Nechushtai, "Could Digital Platforms Capture the Media through Infrastructure?," 10.

²³¹ Nielsen and Ganter, "Dealing with Digital Intermediaries: A Case Study of the Relations between Publishers and Platforms," 3.

²³² Gillespie, "The Politics of 'Platforms,'" 348.

²³³ Nielsen and Ganter, "Dealing with Digital Intermediaries: A Case Study of the Relations between Publishers and Platforms," 2.

²³⁴ Pesce, Neirotti, and Paolucci, "When Culture Meets Digital Platforms: Value Creation and Stakeholders' Alignment in Big Data Use," 2.

²³⁵ Gerlitz and Helmond, "The like Economy: Social Buttons and the Data-Intensive Web," 1350.

issuing opinions. The *blogosphere* was one of the elements which cast aside the tyranny of the formal (and former) media editors. But it was the birth of social media platforms that introduced primary ingredients to the new communicational environment. It allowed the existence of "user-generated content," thus being defined as the collaborative fructification of content ^{236 237}.

Interconnectivity refers to the synthesizing of information from various significant data sources. The new technologies allow actors to combine heterogeneous sources of data in the architecture of algorithms and obtain insights from these combinations. In this whole gearing, the human know-how and creativity are essential factors in the connection of information, revealing new and purposeful facts. Platforms such as *eBay*, *Apple*, *Google*, or *Facebook* base their organizational model on the interconnectivity and portability of prominent data features. These are two attributes that involve not only the "producer" but also the "consumer" in the nexus of infrastructures which facilitate the cooperation and direct transactions, using the system resources ²³⁸.

Liking probably became the most popular endeavor on these social platforms, as it permitted the interaction with the content shared on these networks- from the photos or posts to status updates and comments. The introduction of social buttons revolutionized online communicative activities, also calculating and showing the number of actions performed on a web object ²³⁹.

The issue of language persists and is more acute since the rise of platforms. In a diverse and digital society, the requirements

²³⁶ Gerlitz and Helmond, 1351.

²³⁷ Domingo, "Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making," 7.

²³⁸ Pesce, Neirotti, and Paolucci, "When Culture Meets Digital Platforms: Value Creation and Stakeholders' Alignment in Big Data Use," 3.

²³⁹ Gerlitz and Helmond, "The like Economy: Social Buttons and the Data-Intensive Web," 1352.

concerning language and culture are incredibly high. Digital texts are navigating at high speed and in unprecedented directions, producing powerful shifts in communication, with practices that are visible at a global level. The text conception includes now more possibilities than ever, with multiple types of integration on the screen-based and mobile services ²⁴⁰. Visitors of a web platform are now actively engaged in the text selection process, deciding which navigational patterns suit them the most, by guiding after social and cultural interests and knowledge. The online meanings are subjected now to a construct of cultural remix ²⁴¹.

The outlook of platforms depends on their users. As they are the aggregators of all the content and the activity of individuals and firms, it is central for them to continually find a reward mechanism for their users, maintaining in this manner their role in the public sphere ²⁴².

The recent expansion of the intellectual property establishment based on platforms revealed an asymmetrical relationship of interdependence between the West (and here, the USA is mostly noted) and the developing countries. The West expanded its markets and goods at an international level, transferring cultural products and intellectual properties, with avant-garde technologies, together with the goods and services. However, this came with its price, as these cutting-edge commodities also diffused the intellectual property infringements ²⁴³.

The privacy statements which have been long vehiculated in the online public space have proven to be legal safeguards for companies, not so many defenders of consumer interests. The various

²⁴⁰ Domingo, "Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making," 7.

²⁴¹ Domingo, 8.

²⁴² Dal, *Digital Platforms, Imperialism and Political Culture*, 186.

²⁴³ Dal, 181.

self-protective measures of the industries were taken at the expense of the privacy of consumers. The same issue is raised concerning the “voluntarily posted privacy statements.” It is implied that companies opt for them so that, when the customer information is exploited, they are absolved of responsibility and granting compromised protection for the consumer. Moreover, many users admit viewing the presence of such statements as indicators of online vendor integrity ²⁴⁴.

3.3. PERSONALIZATION AND PRIVACY

Exploring the tension between *personalization* and *privacy* brought unveiled the fact that people’s awareness of the benefits and costs of tailored communication relies upon the general attitude toward disclosing personal data. The consumers’ privacy options are heterogeneous, experiencing the compensation between the benefits of disclosure information and privacy concerns ²⁴⁵. Among the benefits, one might obtain from the information disclosure have various degrees, from the advantage of self-expression, relationship improvement, and social control. The perils include “loss of face, status, or power.” When people let information leak, they give something they feel belongs to them. It is the rationale behind the need for individuals to maintain control over the shared information, even after the disclosure took place ²⁴⁶.

From the user’s point of view, the *private sphere* is the one that defines a situation or space in which he enjoys an exceptional level of privacy. Based on a given location, people crave a certain level of privacy, representing the “ideal level of interaction” with others ²⁴⁷.

²⁴⁴ Fernback and Papacharissi, “Online Privacy as Legal Safeguard: The Relationship among Consumer, Online Portal, and Privacy Policies,” 716, 718.

²⁴⁵ Karwatzki et al., “Beyond the Personalization–Privacy Paradox: Privacy Valuation, Transparency Features, and Service Personalization,” 372.

²⁴⁶ Metzger, “Communication Privacy Management in Electronic Commerce,” 336.

²⁴⁷ Masur and Scharrow, “Disclosure Management on Social Network Sites: Individual Privacy Perceptions and User-Directed Privacy Strategies,” 2.

Since the thriving of services such as e-commerce, online consumers are stimulated to search for information about how a website they are using processes their information. The sites are thus preoccupied with offering information about how the personal data is handled and to whom they will be disclosed ²⁴⁸.

Social networks contain large quantities of information about users. These cover areas, such as user interests, demographic data, friendship connections, and other characteristics. It may lead to *disclosure* of various kinds, from identity and attribute to links ²⁴⁹. Digital privacy breaches are expanding all over the globe. The most recent reports have discussed the issue of hundreds of such violations in numerous sectors (from banking to health care), which led in the end to tens of millions of records that were uncovered ²⁵⁰.

The more the users disclose about themselves, the more they experience benefits from the online systems. The infrastructure of the social web is founded on technical aspects, as well as social convergence aspects, connecting people, applications, and businesses. The social platforms are somewhat altering the concept of privacy on four dimensions: "the endurance of data, the searchability of information, the exact copyability, and invisible audiences." This latter refers to third parties that have access to information without the user's awareness ²⁵¹.

Nevertheless, past experiences with information exposure influence online behavior by enhancing presupposed risks. "Internet experience" is negatively associated with online activities. The user

²⁴⁸ Metzger, "Communication Privacy Management in Electronic Commerce," 341.

²⁴⁹ Aggarwal, *An Introduction to Social Network Data Analytics*, 11.

²⁵⁰ Bednar, Spiekermann, and Langheinrich, "Engineering Privacy by Design: Are Engineers Ready to Live up to the Challenge?," 2.

²⁵¹ Masur and Scharnow, "Disclosure Management on Social Network Sites: Individual Privacy Perceptions and User-Directed Privacy Strategies," 1.

may be tempted to be less outspoken about his/ her personal information ²⁵².

As companies gathered, worked with, and distributed information, which was accessible online, the individuals were often in the situation of losing control over their data. It led, in turn, to the distress associated with online privacy and misuse of personal information. The individuals became self-conscious and expressed their wish to gain more control over what happens to their digital data. Subsequently, the private management and protection of online privacy have become imperative to their virtual existence ²⁵³.

The first step was assigning part of the privacy protection responsibility to the users by conceiving privacy laws and regulations which address the transparency issue, as well as empower the consumer ²⁵⁴. In Europe, there have been healthy initiatives to protect users' data. The *General Data Protection Regulation* (GDPR) was initiated by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union in 2016, and it strengthens the protection of personal data. The personal data markets are booming at unprecedented rates, as personal data became the currency of the digital economy ^{255 256}.

Almost 70% of internet users advocated for many years for new laws that protect the online privacy of consumers. It came as a reply to all the data-mining techniques which converted the personal data into a tradable good. And while the European Union took action by designing strict decrees, the USA opted for a privacy policy based

²⁵² Metzger, "Communication Privacy Management in Electronic Commerce," 343–44.

²⁵³ Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius, "Exploring Motivations for Online Privacy Protection Behavior: Insights From Panel Data," 2.

²⁵⁴ Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius, 2.

²⁵⁵ Karwatzki et al., "Beyond the Personalization–Privacy Paradox: Privacy Valuation, Transparency Features, and Service Personalization," 370.

²⁵⁶ Bednar, Spiekermann, and Langheinrich, "Engineering Privacy by Design: Are Engineers Ready to Live up to the Challenge?," 2.

on self-regulation, as singular companies established their methods of ensuring the online privacy of consumers ²⁵⁷.

More than this, online users had revealed they prefer the "opt-in" policies which constrain websites to ask for permission before they began collecting data and using it. A small number of these users have admitted personalizing their browser settings, so they reject cookies. An even small amount of concealed operating anonymizing software for their computer identity, while almost a quarter prefers providing false data, to protect the real integrity ²⁵⁸. Falsifying the information permits the individuals to keep their privacy, while they experience the advantages of the disclosure. In this somewhat ambiguous manner, *deception* can be perceived as a *privacy protection rule* that limits the informational leaking and protects the users' boundaries. It appears in situations where one of the relational partners prefers keeping certain information to himself, while the other party would expect those facts to be shared ²⁵⁹.

The main social privacy concerns might derive from another personal fact. On the social web, individuals are facing people they are connected to in everyday life. These interpersonal border disturbances might draw repercussions into their real life, while the data mining of the companies does not have any conspicuous consequences ²⁶⁰.

As it became a troubling phenomenon, there were several attempts to diminish the collection and storage of personal data. Third parties are not authorized to share the collected data without the users' consent. They must provide full information regarding how

²⁵⁷ Fernback and Papacharissi, "Online Privacy as Legal Safeguard: The Relationship among Consumer, Online Portal, and Privacy Policies," 716.

²⁵⁸ Fernback and Papacharissi, 717.

²⁵⁹ Metzger, "Communication Privacy Management in Electronic Commerce," 340.

²⁶⁰ Masur and Scharnow, "Disclosure Management on Social Network Sites: Individual Privacy Perceptions and User-Directed Privacy Strategies," 3.

their data will be processed (transparency) and offer them the option to choose whether they want their data to be operated or not ²⁶¹.

The *Informative-use transparency features* have been designed following consumers' requests to be part of their data administration. These are features that permit consumers to access data that has been gathered about their online behavior. They can also review the purposes for which it was selected. The implementation of these "transparency-enhancing mechanisms" is one way to counteract privacy issues. It reinforces the fairness and reciprocity of the procedures. It also reinforces people's eagerness to spend money on websites that understandably communicate their privacy practices. Nonetheless, there might be contrary effects to the transparency efforts: the moment the users grasp how much of their information is being used, the fear of the usage of the platform might increase ²⁶².

The *personalization-privacy paradox* suggests that people who acknowledge privacy attributes the most are the ones who show a low level of readiness to be profiled, to fulfill personalization objectives. Still, it was later revealed that the benefits of online usage of platforms might satisfy consumers' needs for privacy and feedback, easing the synergy with personalized services ²⁶³.

Some researchers also developed theories regarding data privacy. One of them is the *protection motivation theory* (PMT), which implies that privacy-protective behavior is influenced by the *perceived severity* and *response efficacy*. It is suggested that disclosing online information should not be viewed as a dark issue, with nothing but losses at stake. It does have its shared side of advantages, such as the establishment and the cultivation of social relations. Plus, employing

²⁶¹ Bednar, Spiekermann, and Langheinrich, "Engineering Privacy by Design: Are Engineers Ready to Live up to the Challenge?"

²⁶² Karwatzki et al., "Beyond the Personalization-Privacy Paradox: Privacy Valuation, Transparency Features, and Service Personalization," 371.

²⁶³ Karwatzki et al., 371.

and tracking personal information enhances the website navigation and usability and its efficiency. It is the primary mechanism through which companies personalize their messages and online services. It focuses not so much on the reasons why users bypass the information disclosure, as what they perceived as threats in the first place. And how they see themselves as capable of counteracting them ²⁶⁴.

The *information boundary theory* implies that users have a space with delineated boundaries that they oversee and administer. Thus, individuals are inclined to conceive rules which will aid them in choosing which information to disclose. These rules are construed from the individuals' personality, the environmental characteristics, and the assessment of the risk-benefit comparison ²⁶⁵.

Another theory proposed is *communication privacy management*. It implies that individuals consider they have the right to control their private information. And have an active role in the creation of rules about who is granted access and who is turned down from accessing specific information. The *privacy calculus model* indicates that people choose how much they want to disclose about themselves. It is structured based on the perceived benefits (e.g., expressing oneself) versus the perceived costs (e.g., privacy issues). When the benefits have overcome the charges, the users are more prone to sharing information about themselves ²⁶⁶. One of the main drives which push users to comply with the platform requests is information seeking ²⁶⁷.

A hand of research was preoccupied with privacy on platforms such as the iOS and Android operating systems. The growth of the app-based model of software raised the interest in the

²⁶⁴ Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius, "Exploring Motivations for Online Privacy Protection Behavior: Insights From Panel Data," 2, 5.

²⁶⁵ Karwatzki et al., "Beyond the Personalization-Privacy Paradox: Privacy Valuation, Transparency Features, and Service Personalization," 378.

²⁶⁶ Boerman, Kruikemeier, and Zuiderveen Borgesius, "Exploring Motivations for Online Privacy Protection Behavior: Insights From Panel Data," 5.

²⁶⁷ Metzger, "Communication Privacy Management in Electronic Commerce," 341.

exploration of app-based intimacy ²⁶⁸. Both Apple and Google conceived specific codes and procedures, as well as training to construct the leading scheme for app developers who do not work for them but are an essential part of the innovation process. Platforms are in charge of the development of ecosystems, where developers, together with advertisers and experts, cooperate in conceiving the privacy settings ²⁶⁹.

The multiple languages and behavior criterion that people apply in the online sphere has produced communication practices that come from a variety of origins, both local and international ²⁷⁰. Thus, it is appropriate to analyze in the following pages the mechanisms through which advertisements are differentiated and how they adapt to local or international requisites.

3.4. CHAPTER SUMMARY

To better understand the subject, one must also understand the context. The executions used in this thesis have been part of digital campaigns, thus requiring a special section dedicated to the newest changes in the online medium. One of the most potent changes which marked the evolution of online strategies has been depicted as the platformization phenomenon. It ensured the development of what experts define as a “web ecosystem.” This relocation to the digital sphere also determined several cultural ramifications, having the platforms as digital mediators and emissaries. They also shaped the economic implications of advertising as a whole and how its messages will face new metamorphoses.

²⁶⁸ Greene and Shilton, “Platform Privacies: Governance, Collaboration, and the Different Meanings of ‘Privacy’ in IOS and Android Development,” 2.

²⁶⁹ Greene and Shilton, 4, 5.

²⁷⁰ Domingo, “Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making,” 9.

The communication symbols have emerged from joining the public and private domains. Even though physically they were apart, the new technological advances allowed their association. Nonetheless, this sudden exposure has created space for unique communicational needs and habits. The new digital platforms are responsible for conceiving new mechanisms of creating content, conveying it, and, most famous for the advertising sphere of producing money with it. The past years recorded staggering interactions between users who came close by posting and sharing content, as well as being witnesses of tons of advertisements on social media platforms.

A significant advantage for advertising with online platforms has been the capacity to reach consumers with more accuracy and in the proper location. It allowed for the *deep personalization* of the messages that started getting their way. This practice involves choosing and using data about them, based on the presuppositions generated by the big-data collection. It offered routes toward their points of interest and customized the offers which are delivered to them based on various information: recent searches, location, propensity toward specific products or services. Besides empowering them with personal information about the customer, the platforms have also registered another victory. They have the freedom to edit and select the content they prefer — an aspect that was essential for the empirical endeavor of this book.

All in all, the platform studies which became of interest for commercial spheres are the epicenter of social networking sites and applications, as well as websites that provide content sharing of any type. This latter category is of interest to us. The main trait which proves to be of help, not only for their hosts but also for the individuals using them, is the accessibility to information and material which would otherwise be out of reach. The platforms have distinguished themselves as catalysts of innovation for many

products and services, with the direct implication in the digital media. Another critical aspect is the fact that they encouraged individuals toward more compliance and collaboration on various issues. And, appropriately used, have also been engines for many offline initiatives. The junctures and overlapping of which the literature bespoke so fondly has gathered multiple metaphysical valences.

As the chapter treats the subject of big data, it is also crucial to keep in mind the concept of *interconnectivity*. It defines the decantation process of information. The expanding technologies permitted integrating the algorithms designed to gather the consumers' data and generate insights based on several associations. It, however, gave birth to other issues concerning privacy.

It continues to be a perpetual debate, because of its ethical, as well as subjective implications. In some studies, the relationship between the attempts of personalizing the advertising messages based on the consumers' information and their privacy is reviewed. It is implied that their consciousness regarding this subject and their appreciation of benefits and risks is based on their mental outlook on providing personal information. Moreover, in some cases, they considered this process as advantageous, as they have an open path to expressing themselves freely and gaining a sense of social control. The features people belong to and willingly offer have shaped the executorial ideas. The evolution of print advertisements in the analysis is a direct result of these changes.

PART 4

PREVIOUS ADVERTISING STUDIES (AN OVERVIEW OF DIFFERENTIATION)

Apart from reviewing the theoretical background, an overview of the studies that approached this subject from various methodological standpoints is also necessary. It eases the process of better grasping the abstract aspects, as well as offers valuable insights into how differentiated advertising messages impact the consumers, through various types of executions. For this, we will review studies from all over the world, in chronological order, to craft a timeline of the most important and prominent research in this area. The studies are chosen based on the following criteria: they must contain comparative analyses of ads, with a focus on copy language and local and global cultural cues. They were divided into two distinct categories for two reasons: the first is reinforcing the previous literature findings, the second is identifying frameworks for the empirical sections of the book. Most of the studies employed in this area are experiments and content analyses, revealing necessary aspects for a sound methodological framework. Thus, the two sections are *Language use in print ads* and *Local and Global appeals*.

THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE DISTANCE

The *official language distance* ²⁷¹ is a concept addressing the languages used in print advertisements. A global language, such as English, used in the ads indicates a distancing from local ones. It covers three possible scenarios ²⁷²

²⁷¹ Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, "Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads."

²⁷² Nelson and Paek, "A Content Analysis of Advertising in a Global Magazine across Seven Countries. Implications for Global Advertising Strategies."

<i>Local language ads</i>	They include not only the official language of a country but also the dialects
<i>Mixed language ads</i>	The case of advertisements that use local, as well as a global language
<i>Global language ads</i>	Ads using the English language (primarily) or any standardized language worldwide

The present book employs English as a global language, all the others being assigned to the *local* or *dialects* categories.

4.1. LANGUAGE USE IN PRINT ADS

This is one of the key dimensions that serve us later on in the book. The first study to discuss is Ahn & La Ferle's (2008) study. The two tackled this issue from the angle of foreign languages. Their study is from South Korea and follows the subjects' capacity to *recall the brand* and the *body copy messages* from print ads, based on the presented language. The researchers use a 2x2 factorial design for the experiment, one with differences in the brand name- Korean versus English, while the other focuses on the language of a body copy- Korean and English, as well. They analyze the perception of 282 participants, with 46 participating in a pretest and 236 taking part in the central survey. Their choice for college students as a sample is linked to the necessity of them speaking the English language fluently. They develop four ad conditions for the analysis: (1) An English brand name and an English body copy (59 participants)/ (2) An English brand name and a Korean body copy (60 participants)/ (3) A Korean brand name and a Korean body copy (58 participants)/ (4) A Korean brand name and an English body copy (59 participants) ²⁷³.

Based on the findings, the authors suggest that *an ad presenting the brand name in a foreign language* (in this case English),

²⁷³ Ahn and La Ferle, "Enhancing Recall and Recognition for Brand Names and Body Copy: A Mixed-Language Approach."

with the body copy in the local language, is the most effective strategy to enhance recalling the brand and the ad message ²⁷⁴. It is a particular example of mixed language ads' necessity in terms of communicational success.

Other research efforts are put into analyzing ads in global languages. The next study aims at discovering the response of individuals to advertisements in English ²⁷⁵. The study takes place in five countries within the European Union: Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain, with 715 female participants. In Belgium, the analysis is carried on two groups: Dutch-speaking and French-speaking individuals, and the choice of the countries is made based on the wide variations of proficiency in the English language. The participants were asked to provide the meaning for the English phrases in the print ads presented during an experiment. The findings of their study indicate that the respondents were, at times, exceptionally far from genuinely comprehending the ad message (39% of the English phrases were not understood). An important observation is that English is less understood in non-Anglophone European countries, impairing the standardization of messages. Nevertheless, some may argue that this is not a significant consequence overall, as besides communicating a word, the ads also have the purpose of raising consumers' awareness ²⁷⁶.

Further focusing on the impact the language has on consumers, we review a study by Pagani et al. (2015), through which they try to measure the standardization/ differentiation by identifying consumers' reactions to TV ads that contain subtitles or are dubbed in English. The study was carried out in three Western European countries: Italy, Germany, and Spain. The rationale behind

²⁷⁴ Ahn and La Ferle, 113.

²⁷⁵ Gerritsen et al., "English in Product Advertisements in Non-English-Speaking Countries in Western Europe: Product Image and Comprehension of the Text."

²⁷⁶ Gerritsen et al., 358.

the choice of these countries is connected to the circulation of ads in native languages, dubbed in English, and with English subtitles. They had 482 respondents (182 in Italy, 151 in Germany, and 149 in Spain) studying at a university and having ages ranging between 18 and 25 years. Their reason for choosing a young audience segment is linked to the commercials containing the English language, which are destined for young people. It is a between-subjects experiment, based on a survey. The sampling was gathered through the "snowball technique," with participants being asked to spread the invitation to others. The commercials, together with the adjacent questionnaires, were posted on the Qualtrics platform, with invitation links. The categories for the chosen video ads are: English ads, dubbed ads, and subtitled ads. The participants were asked to rate them on a 7-point Likert scale after viewing them ²⁷⁷.

Their findings suggest consumers develop a negative attitude towards advertisements in English. Plus, they developed a negative attitude towards the brand, as well, when they were shown standardized commercials. Also, they did not record preference for the dubbed or subtitled versions of the ads, indicating that these two are equally liked and accepted in all three countries ²⁷⁸. They developed similar attitudes towards the ad and the brand, regardless of what language adaptation method was used.

A holistic approach is dedicated to discovering which textual attributes of the advertisements contribute to the preference of consumers. Two separate conjoint analyses are conducted for two types of products: chocolate and computers. Their experiment consists of showing the participants a controlled set of advertisements, with various manipulated cues such as the slogan, website suffix, and availability statement. The ads are both in Dutch and in English. They

²⁷⁷ Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, "Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads," 5, 6.

²⁷⁸ Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, 10.

analyze how respondents scored each of the ads, including the individual signals, using the local/ global items to differentiate them. The choice for the Netherlands is connected to their lack of preference for local or global products. There are 100 people chosen for the chocolate segment and 100 selected for the computers one ²⁷⁹.

Their results imply that *the advertising copy is the most reliable indicator of brand globalness*. More than this, the advertising copy and the brand naming's importance are considerably more critical for the local consumers than the global ones. There is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the spokesperson in the ad ²⁸⁰.

To define a better *modus operandi* in terms of slogan conception, we also focus on a 2016 study that researches it more in-depth. It reviews which are the elements of a slogan that make it the most effective through an experiment with a self-administrated survey. The target group is formed of 156 undergraduate students from business and marketing programs, with a convenience sampling method. Among the variables, they recall slogan antiqueness, slogan length, slogan language, product category, brand consuming frequency, and sympathy towards the brand. The independent variables used are *slogan recall* and *recognition* with ads in the national language (Spanish), as well as the global language (English) ²⁸¹.

They test whether the respondents would partially or remember the slogan based on the language used. The highest rate of recalling was 65%; however, in terms of spontaneous recalling, the prices were not high at all (15%). Only two brands had scored over 50%: Nike and TCM (telecom service). Also, older brands (*antiqueness*) proved to have higher remembrance rates, as well as those who were short ²⁸². The languages in which the slogans were presented do not show any significant differences.

²⁷⁹ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, "Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis.," 8.

²⁸⁰ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, 9-10.

²⁸¹ Silveira and Galvão, "Do Brands "JUST DO IT?". Studying the Effectiveness of B2C Slogans," 320.

²⁸² Silveira and Galvão, 322.

In the realm of language use, a 2017 study from the US uses a single factor between-subjects design, conducted using English, Spanish, and code-switching ad language. As previous research suggests, English ads address a younger and more well-educated target ²⁸³. The sample is chosen from higher education institutions. Bilingual participants were also in the target. Therefore, the selected universities are from Mexico City, Santiago de Chile, and Quito. There are 465 valid responses obtained through an online survey. The English ads are translated to obtain the equivalent in Spanish ²⁸⁴. Another aim of the study is also to identify if respondents feel culturally stereotyped.

The ads feature a fictitious coffee creamer, and the code-switching ads include the body of the ad in Spanish and the slogan in English. It is the most prominent type of mixed-language ad found in non-English speaking countries. The main results indicated that *the effectiveness of language used in the ad is based on the vitality of communication in the target country*. The perception of the English language as modern and more productive is not universal. Nevertheless, mixed language ads prove to be the best alternative in culturally mixed samples ²⁸⁵.

²⁸³ de Mooij, *Global Marketing and Advertising. Understanding Cultural Paradoxes*; Alvarez, Uribe, and De-La-Torre, "Should I Say It in English? Exploring Language Effects on Print Advertising among Latin American Bilinguals."

²⁸⁴ Alvarez, Uribe, and De-La-Torre, "Should I Say It in English? Exploring Language Effects on Print Advertising among Latin American Bilinguals," 981.

²⁸⁵ Alvarez, Uribe, and De-La-Torre, "Should I Say It in English? Exploring Language Effects on Print Advertising among Latin American Bilinguals."

4.2. LOCAL AND GLOBAL APPEALS

The second section focuses on the global/ local cures provided by various research, illustrated through tailored ads. A comparative study from the Netherlands and Poland measures the effectiveness of tailored advertising in the two countries. The authors assume that the effects of tailored advertising are more potent in a country such as Poland, because of its shorter advertising tradition that makes it more bound to its local culture ²⁸⁶. Their sampling was obtained through social network sites such as Facebook, with 116 individuals engaged (59 Polish respondents and 57 Dutch) who could participate by clicking a hyperlink. The survey they accessed helped at gathering the necessary data for the tailoring of the advertising message for the second phase of the study, combining the initial method with a between-subjects experiment. The variables that measure a tailored ad's dimensions are involvement with the message, perceived relevance, message effectiveness, consumer skepticism, brand attitude, and purchase intention ²⁸⁷.

Their findings point out that the Polish participants had a more positive attitude towards the tailored ads, as they perceived them as more relevant to them. They express more favorable brand attitudes and greater purchase intention. As this applied only to the Polish consumer, it is proof that the message involvement, the perceived relevance, and the skepticism played a mediating role ²⁸⁸.

Comparing local and global appeals, a study from 2014 brings forth a content analysis on 257 commercials. The sample includes 23 countries, with many ads being chosen from each state (from the USA

²⁸⁶ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising," 487.

²⁸⁷ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte, "Assessing the Cross-Cultural Applicability of Tailored Advertising."

²⁸⁸ Maslowska, Smit, and van den Putte.

to Europe and Asia). The businesses are all promoting products from the FMGC (fast-moving consumer goods) category. The coding scheme includes 123 questions, and it was given to two experts who coded the commercials independently ²⁸⁹.

In the following year, Pineda et al. (2015) analyzed newspaper advertisements from Spain and the US. They analyzed 530 ads from several major national newspapers, such as ABC (160 ads), El País (165 ads), The New York Times (128 ads), and The Wall Street Journal (77 ads). They used a coding sheet from Han and Shavitt's work (1994). They used the criteria for individualistic and collectivistic appeals ²⁹⁰. The purpose of their research was to discover whether individualism arises in all the Western cultures homogeneously. Based on their data, the two countries tend to emphasize individualistic appeals generally. It revealed that advertising messages spread individualistic values ²⁹¹.

Another study focusing on the texts of the advertisement proposed developing a scale that rates the message of the ads from the consumer's perspective. The empirical aspects focus on television advertisements, and exploratory factor analysis is used to identify the most important variable in the advertising message. The sample is formed of college students from Western India, with 960 responses being valid and appropriate for the final analysis. The main pillars are the product, individual values, logic, social values, and entertainment, each with sub-items that were coded and rated through a survey ²⁹².

The results indicated that young consumers prefer to receive advertisements that trigger their social and individual values. The ads

²⁸⁹ Zarantonello, Schmitt, and Jedidi, "How to Advertise and Build Brand Knowledge Globally. Comparing Television Advertising Appeals Across Developed and Emerging Economies," 423.

²⁹⁰ Pineda, Hernández-Santaolalla, and del Mar Rubio-Hernández, "Individualism in Western Advertising: A Comparative Study of Spanish and US Newspaper Advertisements," 444.

²⁹¹ Pineda, Hernández-Santaolalla, and del Mar Rubio-Hernández, 447.

²⁹² Mohanty and Sahnay, "Consumers' Message Orientation in Television Advertising and Branding: A Study on Indian Consumers," 6, 8.

for products are always supported by a logical structure, based on their answers, and visual aesthetic is the most eye-grabbing detail of the ad. More than this, the best tailored and creative advertisements are the most effective ²⁹³.

An experimental initiative intended to fill a void in the literature regarding differentiation tests the openness of a nation to foreign markets. Three countries are chosen – Belgium, India, and Iran – that exhibited different levels of market openness. The biggest challenge was choosing the proper models for the print advertisements, as they have to reflect the same amount of attractiveness for all three nations and match the advertised product (a home cinema system). The respondents in the pre-test are asked to rate five local celebrities and five international ones, based on a seven-point Likert scale. This step is necessary, as the manipulation is made on two executional elements: the personality and the copy. The copy manipulation consists of tailoring the ad in the local language (Hindi, Farsi, Dutch) on the one hand, and English on the other ²⁹⁴.

There was a total number of 405 participants with 136 from Belgium, 131 from India, and 138 from Iran. The results indicated that a full differentiation of the ads is a viable option for any of the tested countries. It was explained through the need of individuals from societies isolated from the global trends to embrace the brand's adapted messages, as they portrayed a link to the local culture ²⁹⁵.

Some researchers also dedicate their time and efforts to discovering why a standardized approach is not advisable now in the international advertising landscape. An empirical study from 2015 is made on 157 multinational companies from the USA, with top

²⁹³ Mohanty and Sahney, 13.

²⁹⁴ Rajabi et al., "Consumer Responses to Different Degrees of Advertising Adaptation: The Moderating Role of National Openness to Foreign Markets," 7,8.

²⁹⁵ Rajabi et al., 14.

management people who could provide insights regarding the firms' strategic orientations on the market. The data is collected through a mail survey. The managers admit that even though the desire is to coordinate advertising programs that promote unified executions, to reduce costs as much as possible, the local responsiveness must not be sacrificed. Given this, the companies are forced to find a balance between standardization and differentiation. Also, they admit always being constrained to consider cultural characteristics, as a full standardization would mean exiting the market. An adapted approach breaks the "marketing myopia" that dominated the general perspective for more than two decades ²⁹⁶.

A study from China ²⁹⁷ analyzes qualitative data through interviews with senior marketing managers from 22 global luxury fashion retailers that are currently active in identifying the best strategies for entering the Chinese market. It revealed that foreign luxury retailers are balancing the "global-local challenges" by adapting to market conditions. It is done while maintaining a standardized image through two areas: *using a big, influential city* (Hong Kong, in this case) as a cultural anchor and *using brand communications to raise brand awareness and generate loyalty* while revealing nuances in consumers' sophistication.

Remaining on the ground of luxury brands, another research from 2016 reviews fifteen leading global luxury fashion brands, reviewing whether ads make references to the country of brand origin. The initial intention was to use the material in three languages (Mandarin, Japanese, and English). Still, a trilingual coder revealed that all the executions were almost entirely identical in terms of verbal

²⁹⁶ Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, "Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising," 504.

²⁹⁷ Liu et al., "The Standardization-Localization Dilemma of Brand Communications for Luxury Fashion Retailers' Internationalization into China."

and visual content. Thus, determining the researchers to narrow their analysis material to the English language material ²⁹⁸.

The analysis targets observable geo-references identified based on an a priori classification. There are 250 geo-references found on the 15 brand's websites. The two most distinctive geo-references are *the country of brand origin* and *the relatedness to Western countries*. The agencies and their executives make a priority the geo-references with the potential of strategically positioning the brand, rather than just reflecting the specifics of the target audience. It is more vital for them to be perceived as *relevant* and *distinct* than *believable*. The luxury brand mostly focuses on associating their image with *the West*, not so much on emphasizing their wealth, reinforcing once again, that it is the advertising power pole ²⁹⁹. The reader may review the most important aspects of the two sections - *Language use in print ads* and *Local and Global appeals* below (Table 3). These are the most frequently used concepts in past research exploring the standardization – differentiation issue in discussion.

²⁹⁸ Strebinger and Rusetski, "Prioritizing Geo-References: A Content Analysis of the Websites of Leading Global Luxury Fashion Brand," 7.

²⁹⁹ Strebinger and Rusetski, 11.

Table 3. Timeline of studies focusing on language and local and global appeals

Mixed language ads	Language use in ads		Local and Global appeals	
	Year	2008	2013	
	Author	Ahn & LaFerle	Maslowska et al.	
	Analyzed material/features	Body copy (print ads) Brand name	Tailored ads (Values, beliefs, lifestyle preferences, cultural personalization)	
	Countries	South Korea	The Netherlands, Poland	
	Languages	2 languages (Korean, English)	1 language (English)	
	Main concepts	Copy message Brand recall	Involvement with the message Perceived relevance Message effectiveness Consumer skepticism Brand attitudes Purchase intention	
	Participants	282 (quantitative study)	116 (quantitative study)	
	Year	2010	2015	
	Author	Gerritsen et al.	Mohanty and Sahney	
Global language ads	Analyzed material/features	Copy of the ad (print)	Social values Product traits Entertainment	
	Countries	Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain	India	
	Languages	1 language (English)	1 language (English)	
	Main concepts	Copy meaning	Ad message rating	
	Participants	715 (quantitative study)	960 (quantitative study)	

Part 4. Previous advertising studies (an overview of differentiation)

<i>Mixed language ads</i>	<i>Language use in ads</i>	<i>Local and Global appeals</i>
	Year	2015
	Author	Pagani et al.
	Analyzed material/features	Copy of the ad (video) Copy of the ad (print) The message, the language
	Countries	Italy, Germany, Spain Belgium, Iran, India
	Languages	4 languages (Italian, German, Spanish, English) 4 languages (Hindi, Farsi, Dutch, English)
	Main concepts	Copy meaning Attitude towards the brand Attitude towards the ad Cultural adaptation of the message
	Participants	482 (quantitative study) 405 (quantitative study)
<i>Global and local language ads</i>	Year	2015
	Author	De Meulenaer et al.
	Analyzed material/features	Copy of the ad (slogan), Website suffix, Availability statement Standardization (1 st case study)
	Countries	The Netherlands USA
	Languages	2 languages (Dutch and English) 1 language (English)
	Main concepts	Perceived brand globalness Differentiated advertising programs
	Participants	200 (quantitative study) 405 (qualitative study)

Part 4. Previous advertising studies (an overview of differentiation)

	<i>Language use in ads</i>	<i>Local and Global appeals</i>
<i>Global and local language ads</i>	Year	2016
	Author	Silveira and Galvão
	Analyzed material/features	Copy of the ad (slogan)
	Countries	Spain
	Languages	2 languages (Spanish and English)
	Main concepts	Slogan (antiqueness, length, language) Slogan recall Recognition Attitude towards the brand Brand consuming frequency
	Participants	156 (quantitative study)
<i>Global, local, mixed language ads</i>	Year	2016
	Author	Alvarez et al.
	Analyzed material/features	Copy of the ad (print)
	Countries	USA
	Languages	1 language (English)
	Main concepts	Attitude towards the ad Processing fluency Cultural stereotype
	Participants	465 (quantitative study)
		Standardization (2 nd case study)
		China
		1 language (Mandarin)
		Standardized communication strategies Brand awareness
		50 (qualitative study)
		2016
		Strebinger and Rusetski
		Brand websites Country of Brand Origin Geo-references on websites
		China
		1 language (English)
		Relatedness to Western countries Relevant, distinct, believable traits
		15 websites* (no participants)

4.3. COMMUNICATIONAL FUSION THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS

All these communicational implications could not be discussed without reviewing the role of digital platforms. These are the ones sustaining the modern advertising efforts and how differentiation is present in the digital space can be researched under various aspects. The following papers are evoking the most important initiatives linked to our subject.

The first study we mention focuses on how collaborative text making is an international manifestation of cultural remix. It tracks traditional composition principles with digital resources (video, image, audio, written text) for conceiving messages and bridging cultural and linguistic affiliations. The study gathers data from Philippine students. A multimodal analysis was applied, using color-coding speech, online gestures, and writing ³⁰⁰.

The multimodal transcription frame allows a linear and layered reading of the data. Each transcription frame follows three steps of conception. First, a title bar was associated with each video, theme, and segment. Second, there was a body frame assigned to each mode, and last, a narrative description was developed for the sector to connect the transcription with observations. The participants were trained to learn how to use sequencing techniques such as *layering* and *looping*. The findings confirmed that using a range of representations and multiple discourses produce diverse content, rapidly distributed among the students. This type of exercise was useful in reducing differences regarding language and culture ³⁰¹.

Another study carries an online survey-based experiment on 165 respondents recruited via social media in the Netherlands. The language used in the material is Dutch, as it was previously suggested

³⁰⁰ Domingo, "Transnational Language Flows in Digital Platforms: A Study of Urban Youth and Their Multimodal Text Making," 12.

³⁰¹ Domingo, 12, 19.

in the literature that the native language is essential for understanding irony, one of the main traits used in ads. They designed a pretest with eight sets of advertisements and the main concepts measured were: “comprehension of the tagline, perceived complexity, creativity, ad appreciation, brand attitude, and purchase intention” ³⁰².

The results indicate that conventional metaphors have a positive influence on *evaluation* and *persuasiveness*, while customary irony triggers adverse effects on the two concepts. The metaphors decrease the complexity of the ad and increase the perceived creativity and appreciation, enhancing the purchase intention and the positive attitudes toward the brand. Conventional metaphors make the abstract traits of a product more concrete, increasing the perceived creativity and appreciation. Combining tropes with irony did not enhance the persuasiveness of the advertisements ³⁰³.

To this extent, how viable is a multi-ethnic digital strategy in a Western-dominated advertising landscape? A 2017 double research proposed such an analysis, considering the opinions of both local, as well as immigrants- Japanese residents and Japanese immigrants to Canada in the first study, and Chinese residents, and Chinese immigrants to Canada. There were interviews conducted, a content analysis of qualitative data for the first study, as well as a questionnaire-based experiment for the second ³⁰⁴. The experiment was made on the brand “Jaguar”.

The findings of the first study imply that the most common associations with multi-ethnic advertising are *brand globalness* (36%) and *brand inclusiveness* (35%), as well as traits such as *strange* (30%) or *creative* (20%). The respondents who moved to Canada form more

³⁰² Burgers et al., “Making Ads Less Complex, yet More Creative and Persuasive: The Effects of Conventional Metaphors and Irony in Print Advertising,” 519–20.

³⁰³ Burgers et al., 527.

³⁰⁴ Strebing et al., “Is Multi-Ethnic Advertising a Globally Viable Strategy for a Western Luxury Car Brand? A Mixed-Method Cross-Cultural Study,” 3.

multi-ethnic imagery of the brands presented, while the *locals* display more significant trustworthiness for the spokespeople of their ethnicity. The second study's findings support the findings of the first study, as immigrants from China are more open to multi-ethnic approaches than their Chinese peers. On the same note, nevertheless, the Chinese immigrants exhibit lower needs of differentiation. However, comparing the results from the two studies, it is acknowledged that the two nations prefer the conventional "Western globalness" to the new trend of "multi-ethnic globalness" for a brand with Western origin ³⁰⁵.

Another research from the same year proposes an overview of the ad metaphors (verbal and visual), to reveal the consumers' preferences in terms of bank services. A quick pretest is made on 20 on-the-job graduate students, who conceive a list with the most extensively used services. Afterward, another 20 graduate students rate the most frequently used ones with seven-point scales for involvement. Thus, the most popular bank services are selected, and the stimulus can be conceived according to this ³⁰⁶.

There were 224 working graduate students selected for the experiment in a 2x2 between-subjects factorial design (unavailable versus available brand biography and high versus low ad metaphors). The participants received a print ad version of a bank's financial services with a brand biography or one without testing the brand preference. The manipulation check for the ad metaphor was assessed by the rating the consumers gave to the verbal and visual expressions, on a seven-point scale.

The main findings indicate that for low-income consumers it is best to use concrete and specific information for the promoted products, and no textual brand biographies. The ad metaphor level is best to remain low. On the other hand, for high-income consumers,

³⁰⁵ Strebinger et al., 6, 7.

³⁰⁶ Kao, Wu, and Yu, "The Impact of Construal Level on Brand Preferences: Ad Metaphors and Brand Biography as Moderators," 55.

the situation is the opposite. They prefer online advertisements with abstract features and biographies, thus developing brand preferences ³⁰⁷.

A 2018 approach to international advertising proposes scrutinizing the traits that make an advertisement shareable at a global level. As one of the main preoccupations of researchers in the area of *viralization*, the following findings shed some light on the elements that give appeal to advertisements. An online survey is used, selecting participants through the “snowball sampling technique”. The two countries involved are the USA and India, with 510 completed questionnaires (266 recovered from India and 244 from the USA) ³⁰⁸.

The objective was to explore the elements of viral content in advertisements through content analysis. There were 35 viral advertisements selected from the Adweek platform, with brands that are common both in the USA and India. Among the variables used are the message strategy, emotional appeal, function of advertising, borrowed interest devices, and duration of the advertisement. The coding is dichotomous, with values of 0 and 1, 0 indicating the absence of the variable, and 1 indicating its presence. The findings suggest that most global advertisements are supported by transformational appeals with positive emotional content ³⁰⁹.

In a 2019 study made on smart mobile devices, a team of researchers tries to identify the users’ perceptions of *mobile advertising value* and *acceptance*. The countries chosen for the analysis are China and Australia. They illustrate cultural differences placed at opposite ends of the spectrum (China with collectivistic features and Australia with individualistic ones). The study employs a survey. The team uses a six-measurement scale for the *perceived functional value*, an eight-item range for the *perceived emotional value*, and a three-item scale for the

³⁰⁷ Kao, Wu, and Yu, 56, 58.

³⁰⁸ Sharma and Kaur, “Modeling the Elements and Effects of Global Viral Advertising Content: A Cross-Cultural Framework,” 3.

³⁰⁹ Sharma and Kaur, “Modeling the Elements and Effects of Global Viral Advertising Content: A Cross-Cultural Framework.”

perceived credibility scale. The original survey is developed in English, followed by its translation into Mandarin ³¹⁰.

The sample is formed of 364 high school students, with ages ranging between 17 and 19, 55% being female participants, and 45% male participants. An identic data collection procedure involves 238 Australian high school students, with 60% female respondents and 40% male respondents. The results reveal that *the perceived functional value* has the most vigorous repercussions in mobile advertising acceptance, regardless of the two cultures. The *perceived credibility value* is the second most important value. Plus, the effect of *emotional value* is significant for mobile advertising. The greater the interaction between consumers and mobile advertisements, the bigger the degree of trust the consumers have ³¹¹.

4.4. CORE IDEAS FROM THE THIRD PART

This chapter reviews the primary studies that empirically analyze the differentiation topic and use the theory that brings a clearer perspective on practical uses. The first observation from the beginning of the chapter is the frequent use of the content analysis and the experiment as main research methods, coupling the concepts extracted from the literature with their impact on the consumer. These inspired the choice for this book's case studies. With plenty of studies revised in the last pages, this summary emphasizes the most important findings that guide the reader through the subject.

It has been observed that showing the brand name in English-while preserving the body copy in the local language- is the most appropriate approach for raising the levels of brand recall and message. In the countries where English is not the mother tongue, the participants in the experiments had difficulties in grasping the

³¹⁰ Liu et al., "Culture, Perceived Value, and Advertising Acceptance: A Cross-Cultural Study on Mobile Advertising," 11.

³¹¹ Liu et al., 11, 18-19.

significance of the words. Thus, an alternative for the standardization tactics of the ad copy is necessary, as well. A misunderstood message or the inability to understand makes the consumer develop negative feelings toward the brand, as for the advertisements in English, in general. When provided a means of translating the ads, in the case of the video ones, individuals do not present preferences for the dubbed or subtitled versions.

Another finding of the previous studies was that the copy of an advertisement is the most reliable indicator for the perceived brand globalness of an ad. Also, the copy, together with the naming, is more appreciated when attuned to local consumers than the global trends. The spokesperson (the protagonist of the ad) is not as relevant. The differentiation of all the ad elements is very well received.

An exciting finding is connected to the perception between Western countries with a high GDP versus the ones with a medium one and a third group with low GDP. The first aspect noticed is that in terms of experience, for the participants from the two groups of countries, the brand attitude and brand uniqueness are more important than brand awareness. Another observation is that in the countries aspiring to be members of the global culture, brands should keep their international value framework and try to promote their products through it.

The countries that have an average GDP could be approached through activation and other techniques that determine the consumer to be part of the brand experience—references regarding how the product functions did not prove to be a success. The same strategy reveals to be the most suitable alternative in the case of the high GDP countries, as it invites the consumers to uncover the brand's unique features. The low-income consumers are more concerned with the practical implications of the products, whereas the wealthier ones are more preoccupied with the involvement of the brand.

PART 5

DIGITAL PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS. PROSPECTS OF CREATIVE SCENARIOS

This chapter is dedicated to the first part of the empirical endeavor of this book. It comprises a content analysis on 1010 digital print ads from the 2014-2018 timeframe. The reason for choosing this research method is its recurrence in many studies related to advertising research ³¹². There are a couple of underlying reasons behind this choice. The first is *why* the print ads in this sample are relevant. The second is *what* they signify in the timeframe selected, and *how* to assess the original features of those from the beginning to those from the end of the period ³¹³. A *referential content analysis* was performed, and the analysis grid is an assemblage of different approaches and concepts taken from the literature. These are meant to embody the complexity of advertising differentiation.

As the content analysis is profoundly connected to the quantitative procedures, the objective is obtaining homogenous and standardized data with each of the coding categories ³¹⁴. However, some *thematic inferences* of a qualitative nature are collected through the last category of the codebook. One of the key advantages of the content analysis is setting a neutral frame with neutral guidelines that,

³¹² Fastoso and Whitelock, "Regionalization vs. Globalization in Advertising Research: Insights from Five Decades of Academic Study"; Gelbrich, Roschk, and Eisend, "Advertising, Cross-Cultural."; Kanso, Nelson, and Kitchen, "Meaningful Obstacles Remain to Standardization of International Services Advertising"; Kao, Wu, and Yu, "The Impact of Construal Level on Brand Preferences: Ad Metaphors and Brand Biography as Moderators."

³¹³ Krippendorff, *Content Analysis. An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Second Edition), 82.

³¹⁴ Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS*, 187.

besides providing a uniformization of typically unstructured material, reduces the subjective biases ³¹⁵.

After reviewing some introductory thoughts about the content analysis, we will revise the main research questions proposed for this section (Table 6). These are linked to the main concepts reviewed in the previous chapters. The first set of questions focuses on the *official language distance*. The second set looks at the prevalence of global or local cues through the *perceived brand globalness* concept. The third set proposes discovering which are the most prominent visual metaphors in the ads, while the fourth addresses several extra aspects linked to the differentiation-standardization dichotomy. Each set of questions also has adjacent hypotheses.

Table 4. Research questions and hypotheses for the content analysis

<i>Official language distance</i>	RQ1	What is the official language distance in the print ads?
	RQ1.1	What is the official language distance according to years?
	RQ1.2	What is the official language distance according to countries?
	H1	<i>The countries with smaller scores for the official language distance tend to have most ads in the local languages.</i>
<i>Perceived brand globalness</i>	RQ2	What is the perceived brand globalness of the ads?
	RQ2.1	What is the perceived brand globalness according to countries?
	H2.	<i>The countries with smaller scores for the perceived brand globalness tend to have the most differentiated and locally adapted print ads.</i>
<i>Visual ad metaphors</i>	RQ3	Are the visual scenarios from the ads congruent or incongruent in most ads?
	RQ3.1	Which type of incongruity is most prevalent?
	H3.	<i>A high number of incongruent print ads is a predictor of the artificial symbiosis scenario.</i>

³¹⁵ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 290.

Copy, ad types, and product categories	RQ4	Is the same copy used in several countries by the same brand, in the same year?
	RQ5	Which type of ad is the most used?
	RQ6	Which are the categories that have the most print executions, and which ones have the least?
	H4.	<i>The countries are constant in their evolution regarding standardized or differentiated approaches toward print ads over the years.</i>

5.1. PATTERNS OF DIFFERENTIATION

The differentiation subject is an overly complex one that raises several difficulties. It is not only a challenge defining it, but it is also hard transposing it empirically. In literature, several authors resume analyzing the contexts in which visuals and copy intertwine. However, having a holistic approach and catching the subtleties of specific nuances, one must bring together several concepts that define *differentiation* for each ad. The framework must also be universally adaptable and applicable to each country’s specifics.

Much of the published research regarding advertising impact appears in the literature as *copy research*. The literature proposes a couple of indicators that serve as an excellent basis in print ad analysis. The present book provides a content analysis including these indicators.

5.1.1. COUNTRIES EXPLORED

The content analysis is performed on 1010 print advertisements collected from five countries: the USA (as a point of reference), the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Romania. It is a convenience sample, based on the languages accessible to the author, as well as research material that could be translated and analyzed, the significance of each ad’s message being vital in this process. The

additional reason, of equal importance, for the choice of these countries, is the market dominance in the international advertising landscape. The main pillar of reference in the industry in the United States of America, the literature considers it the central axis of Western influence. However, the objectives of this work did not include Western-Eastern differences, as much as features of differentiation in advertising, across multiple countries.

They are gathered from the following platforms: *adsoftheworld.com*, *adforum.com*, *lareclame.fr*, *iqads.ro*, and *issuu.com/bizmarketing*. All five, regardless of the language of origin, are covering campaigns with worldwide executions. The first two platforms *Ads of the World* (f.a.) and *AdForum* (f.a.) are both in English, *La Réclame* (f.a.) is in French, *IqAds* (f.a.) in Romanian, and the *BizMarketing collection* (f.a.) had custom settings. The reason for choosing more than one or two international platforms resides in their specifics. *Ads of the World* is probably the most prominent one, promoting international campaigns translated into English. The other four platforms were also consulted, identifying which are the local campaigns promoted at an international level. The two-language version of the executions was preserved and marked accordingly in the content analysis, offering a broader basis for interpretation, as language is a fundamental aspect in the differentiation of the advertisements and the consumer's preference.

The *Ads of the World* and *AdForum* websites offer the big picture of an international campaign, and they represented the starting point in the research material. There is, however, a slight difference between them, as *AdForum* displays executions that are not translated from the original language and provides a much-needed source of comparison for standardized executions. *La Réclame* offers insights into the French advertising executions, as well as international examples. *IqAds* was the Romanian platform, adding a consistent number of local prints, as well as *BizMarketing*. Because

Romania is an Eastern European country, the prevalence of local campaigns was smaller in the international landscape than in the other four countries. It is the most famous Romanian marketing magazine, and it is the sole one having all the digital editions, uploaded on the issuu platform, and spanning the five years. It is a valuable asset for the present research, as its specifics are advertising and marketing, thus being filled with material of interest.

These platforms act as aggregators of worldwide advertisements, having individual sections for each type of execution, allowing you to choose specific countries for various executions of brands, based on country and brand filters. The advertisements on these platforms are selected based on professionals from local and international advertising campaigns. For the analysis hygiene, only the digital print ads used as executions in campaigns were chosen, separating them from other types of visuals from websites or social media posts.

As mentioned above, the period included in the analysis is 2014-2018. The reason for solely choosing these five years is strongly connected to the desire of identifying the latest tendencies in print advertising executions while excluding the pandemic outburst that changed the communicational landscape and introduced several other variables into a discussion.

Also, the analyzed period had to be complete, and the platforms need to have their database updated by the time the analysis took place. It is a horizontal analysis, comparing the digital print ads from each of the selected countries. The pairs reveal differences and similarities of print ads based on several dimensions: reviewing the main product categories and the leading brands, from imagery to text, and searching for conventional and divergent clues.

The brands are chosen based on the Interbrand rankings ³¹⁶ for each analyzed year. This ranking platform proved to be the best choice because it represents an international division specialized in brand consultancy, strategy, and analytics. It offers global rankings, and it is among the few profile websites offering access to an archive with filters for categories and countries. More than this, it lists the brands based on the same criteria (profit and value) as other platforms (e.g., Forbes). The top brands of each category are selected, followed by the collection of all the print ads used in the brands' international campaigns in a given year. The condition is that each of the brands is found in each selected country. The categories are the following: *Business services, FMGC (fast-moving consumer goods), Media, Technology, Restaurants, Alcohol, Apparel, Financial Services, Automotive, Electronics, Logistics, Retail, Beverages, Energy, Luxury, and Sporting goods.*

5.1.2. THE ANALYZED DIMENSIONS

The codebook is based on main concepts gathered from the literature, relevant for copy and visuals in an ad, and that embody the defining parameters of differentiation: *perceived brand globalness, official language distance, the salience of space and colors, visual metaphors, and advertising types.*

THE SALIENCE OF SPACE AND COLORS

Another concept worth bringing into discussion is the *salience of space & colors*. The use of white space has become customary in advertising. In the various type of ads, the main perception is "white space has a purpose". The extent to which the white space is used, as well as the use of colors, is an essential part of the commercial. Moreover, it maps the proper allocation of copy (for the headline, tagline, etc.) and images that complete its communication ³¹⁷.

³¹⁶ "Interbrand."

³¹⁷ Margariti et al., "A Typology of Minimalism in Advertising."

For the present book, the items are slightly adapted. The *space* dimension is split into three categories: the *presence of white space*, *use of colors*, and *black & white*. Further on, the *images* section is divided into the *presence of images*, *one image*, *two or more images*, *colorized images*, and *black & white images*. It provides valuable insight regarding the choice brands makes in terms of focusing on a single visual element or several. Another section added by the author is *brand colors*. It is in strong connection with the *visual metaphors*. The *colors* section provides cues for the brand's color palette.

ADVERTISING TYPES

This concept classifies each type of ad based on its communication objective. The five categories are: *call stimulation ad*, *product offer ad*, *price offer ad*, *reconnect ad*, and *reassuring ad* ³¹⁸.

<i>Call stimulation ads</i>	A strong call to action motivating the consumer to purchase the product
<i>Product offer ad</i>	The emphasis is put on the presentation of the product
<i>Price offer ads</i>	Puts the price in the spotlight
<i>Reconnect ads</i>	Reestablish the relationship between the product and the consumer
<i>Reassurance ads</i>	Present the qualities of the product/ service to the consumers

The codebook layout is inspired by Harris & Attour's (2003) model, the authors who address the differentiation-standardization issue and provide one of the few functional instruments. Each concept in the codebook comes with subsets of categories. In the case of the *perceived brand globalness*, it must be emphasized that we discuss

³¹⁸ Bass et al., "Wearout Effects of Different Advertising Themes: A Dynamic Bayesian Model of the Advertising-Sales Relationship."

certain standardized elements in an international campaign, as well as their differentiation according to the local specifics (whether they are different and what language is employed), and mixed-language ads. The coding is dichotomous, with dummy variables (0 indicating the absence of the element, and 1 indicating its presence). After the analysis, an intercoder reliability check has been made to assess the best values.

The first section of the codebook is dedicated to pictures. The first reviewed concept is *perceived brand globalness* ³¹⁹ for visual dimensions of the ad. It subsequently comprises two recurrent elements in ads that the literature indicates as being representative: *the brand logo* (part of the brand’s identity) and *famous spokesperson* (the protagonists of the ad, reflecting whether they represent the local community or the international medium). The two concepts are coded through two instances – global or local positioning – one excluding the other (Table 5).

Table 5. *Picture - Perceived brand globalness items*

<i>Picture</i>	
1.1. <i>Brand logo</i>	<i>Perceived brand globalness</i>
	Local positioning
	Global positioning
1.2. <i>Famous spokesperson</i>	Local positioning
	Global positioning

The second concept used is the *salience of space & colors* ³²⁰. The three visual aspects that it reviewed are *space, images, and colors* (Table 6). Space includes the three following components: *the presence of white space* in the advertisements, *the use of colors*, or if the brand opted for a

³¹⁹ De Meulenaer, Dens, and De Pelsmacker, “Which Cues Cause Consumers to Perceive Brands as More Global? A Conjoint Analysis.”

³²⁰ Margariti et al., “A Typology of Minimalism in Advertising.”

black and white execution. The *images* subsection reviews if ads contain an image or several and, similar to the previous section, the number of colorized photos versus the black and white ones. In the case of colors, not just any type of coloring palette would suffice. There is an additional *brand colors* section. If the ad chromaticity is different than the brand's, the attempt was to diverge from the regular and surprise the consumer. This approach shifts the artistic direction in terms of executions.

Table 6. Picture - Salience of space & colors items

<i>Picture</i>	
1.3. <i>Space</i>	<i>The salience of space & colors</i>
	Presence of white space
	Use of colors
	Black & white
1.4. <i>Images</i>	Presence of images
	One image
	Two or more images
	Colorized images
1.5. <i>Colors</i>	Black & white images
	Brand colors
	Different colors

These are the concepts solely covering the visual dimensions of the ads. In the upcoming paragraphs, the section dedicated to the copy is reviewed, as well. All the textual components are considered when designing the codebook. Even though few advertisements make use of all the standard copy elements of the ad, this approach offers relevant information regarding what product categories heavily rely on detailed messages. And which ones shift toward a “no-copy” execution. Thus, the first dimension is dedicated to a prominent section of the print ad: the *headline*. The second section reviews the *subheads*, the third one is dedicated to the *body copy*, and the final one covers the *slogans*.

Unlike the visual elements, the copy section evaluates two major concepts (Table 7). The first one is the *perceived brand globalness*, this time for textual cues, revealing either a standardized version of copy elements or the locally adapted (the differentiated ones). The second concept assessed is the *official language distance* ³²¹ that makes a clear distinction between the use of the English language copy versus the local languages (including the official dialects). It offers a sense of how appealing it is for different international brands to craft the messages for their consumers in their local languages or if they prefer a more straightforward approach through standardization.

Table 7. Copy - Perceived brand globalness and official language distance items

<i>Copy</i>			
	<i>Official language distance</i>	<i>Perceived brand globalness</i>	
2.1. <i>Headline</i>	Local language (including dialects)	Local positioning	
	Global language (English)	Global positioning	
2.2. <i>Subhead</i>	Local language (including dialects)	Local positioning	
	Global language (English)	Global positioning	
2.3. <i>Body copy</i>	Local language (including dialects)	Local positioning	
	Global language (English)	Global positioning	
2.4. <i>Slogan</i>	Local language (including dialects)	Local positioning	
	Global language (English)	Global positioning	

³²¹ Pagani, Goldsmith, and Perrachio, “Standardization vs. Adaptation: Consumer Reaction to TV Ads Containing Subtitled or English Dubbed Ads.”

The third segment of the codebook is dedicated to the *product portrayal* of the products, embodying the *visual metaphors*. As the name of the concept suggests, the complexity level increases, addressing not only the visual features but also the textual ones. Based on this section, the total amount of ads are divided into two groups: *congruent* and *incongruent* ads. As they have rather bland and predictable executions, The congruent ads are not of particular concern for the analysis, as the metaphors are present only in the case of the incongruent ones. However, they are marked accordingly and provide insights about the brands that opted for more informative ads.

The incongruent ads are the main focus, as they comprise unexpected ideas, giving the ads the creative touch. These are further distributed, according to three types of scenarios the literature proposes: the *realistic symbiosis* - the *replacement*, and the *artificial symbiosis* (Table 8). These are associated with different product categories and brands, as well as the countries of choice. Based on what the literature indicates, all three scenarios are perceived as leveraging the same number of creative ideas, not making one more valuable than the others.

Table 8. Product portrayal - Visual metaphors items

Product portrayal	
	Visual metaphors
3.1. Congruent ads	-
3.2. Incongruent ads	Realistic symbiosis
	Replacement
	Artificial symbiosis

After evaluating the content of the print ads, the fourth section focuses on their *general layout* (Table 9). This involves two directions. The first is the absence of language or visual elements of specific ads. It is an important feature, as the lack of certain features

can be used to amplify the significance of the message. The second subcategory reflects upon the main advertising types. These define ads according to the message's primary objective. The *call stimulation ads* entice the consumer, while others, such as the *product offer ads*, focus entirely on the *product*. A third category stimulates the consumer with appealing *prices*, and some simply attempt to *reconnect* with the consumers. The last category focuses on *reassuring* consumers of the features of the promoted product or service.

Table 9. General layout items
General layout

4.1. Absence of elements	Absence of language
	Absence of visual elements
4.2. Types	Advertising types
	Call stimulation ad
	Product offer ad
	Price offer ad
	Reconnect ad
	Reassuring ad

The final column of the content analysis illustrates the main qualitative *observations* drawn from the ad analysis. It is the sole qualitative section, revealing essential creative features or patterns from the executions. It is a thematic approach, identifying specific executional cues that can be coded and associated with certain product categories. These provide insights into how the scenarios are adapted according to product specifications, as well as the metaphors.

Two hundred of the ads were coded in parallel by another researcher. An intercoder reliability test was performed to ensure the consistency of the results.

We first take a glimpse into the general data concerning the distribution of ads according to year, product category, and brands. The first distribution is according to years (Chart 1). The sample of 1010 print advertisements is further split based on the criteria

previously mentioned in the design section. There were considerable efforts put into obtaining an even distribution across the five years. However, the final partitioning is slightly unbalanced due to the several selection principles involved in the selection process. The smaller campaigns, as well as the ones with local specific, were not the focus for the platforms’ objectives.

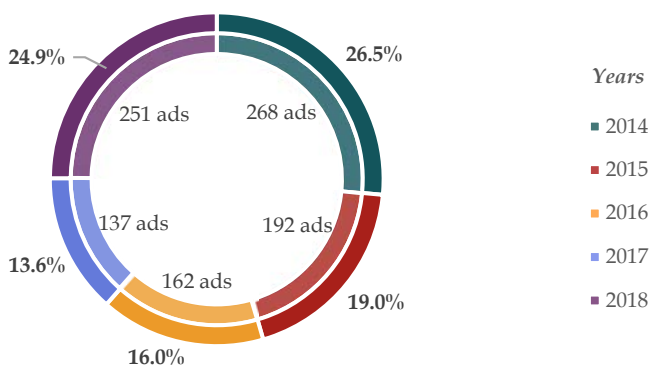


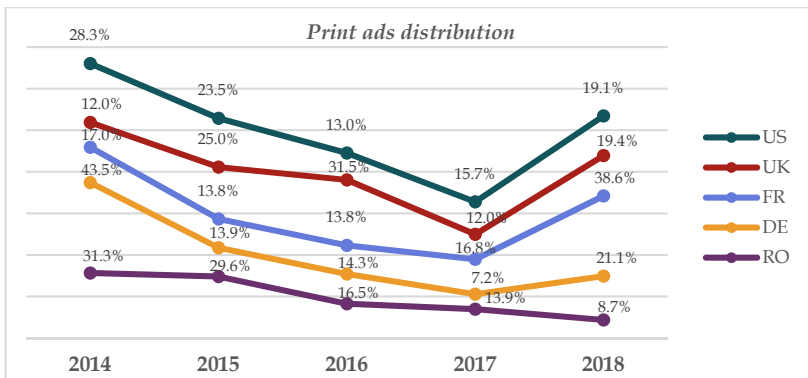
Chart 1. Print ads distribution according to year

The first striking aspect is the distinctiveness of two years, leading in terms of ads number. These are 2014 with 26.5 percent (268 ads), respectively 2018 with a 24.9 percent (251 ads), the years in between having recorded a smaller amount of print. The most substantial decline has been recorded in 2017, with 13.6 percent (137 print ads). Based on the fact the selection criteria are consistent during the analyzed period, the last year indicates a general increase of interest for print advertisements as a communication medium. The year 2018 registered an increase of 120 more ads than its predecessor, reaching a staggering number of 24.9 percent (251 ads).

Further on, a set of frequencies offered insights regarding which product categories are most prone to be promoted through print advertisements and which are the top brands during the

analyzed period. Firstly, we will shortly review the split of ads according to countries (Graph 1).

As expected, the international platforms are more abundant in campaigns than those with a national specific. Even if national platforms have fewer case studies, these come as an aid and supplement the database with locally adapted versions of a campaign. This aspect reveals an additional set of information, as it indicates which countries outstand in terms of numbers. The primary focal point was observing the evolution trends and common patterns.



Graph 1. Print ads distribution according to countries and years

The starting point of the analysis for each country was set based on the yearly number of advertisements. The first noticeable aspect in the graph is the seemingly constant evolution of two states: the US and the UK. These have reported only slight amounts of change during the four years. The first analyzed country is the US, with 22.8 percent of the total number of ads (230 ads). It has the best ascension at the beginning of the analyzed period, with 28.3 percent (65 ads) in 2014 and 23.5 percent (54 ads) in 2015. In 2016, there is a slight decrease, going down to 13.5 percent (31 ads), but from 2017 there is a constant increase to 15.7 percent (36 ads), respectively 19.1 percent (44 ads) in 2018.

The UK has 108 ads 10.7 percent (108 ads) that fulfill the criteria. The beginning is quite timid, as there are only 12 percent (13 ads) in 2014. The year 2015 reveals a change in this tendency, the number rising to 25 percent (27 ads). In the middle of the period, in 2016, the numbers keep on rising, with 31.5 percent (34 ads). In 2017, however, there is a significant descent, as the numbers dropped back to 12 percent (13 ads), and in 2018 the numbers rise a 19.4% percent (21 ads).

France is the first example of an unexpected evolution. It has a share of 33 percent (334 ads) of the total. The ads' evolution registers a strong start, counting 17 percent (57 ads) by the end of the first year. Even though the beginning is promising, in the following year, the number of ads plummets to 13.8 percent (46 ads). The year 2016 does not differ much from the previous, having the same number of ads, but 2017 marks the beginning of a spectacular ascent, as that year records 16.8 percent (56 ads). The most unexpected change, however, appears in the last year. It is the one that reshapes the whole classification, transforming France into the leader. There is a 38.6 percent (129 ads), revealing a turning point for this type of advertising execution. In the upcoming paragraphs, we will be reviewing the brands and the numbers that determine this phenomenon.

The next country with a fluctuating development is Germany. Having a total of 22 percent (223 ads), it has the best start among all the nations. The year 2014 has 43.5 (97 ads). After the first year, the German executions record a sequential drop, going down to 13.9 percent (31 ads) in 2015, then slightly up to 14.3 percent (32 ads) in 2016. They reach their lowest point in 2017, with only 7.2 percent (16 ads). However, 2018 contains 21.1. percent (47 ads), joining the ascending trend of print executions from the aforementioned countries, as well.

Romania is another example of a country with a mild evolution during the analyzed period, gathering 11.4 percent (115

ads). In 2014, the Romanian print ads were the most numerous, counting 31.3 percent (36 ads). The evolution pattern was remarkably similar to the German one, following a descending slope in the next year. In 2015, the numbers slowly went down to 29.6 percent (34 ads), followed by 16.5 percent (19 ads) in the middle of the analyzed period. The year 2017 records only a slight descent to 13.9 percent (16 ads). However, the year 2018 reaches only 8.7% (10 ads). Even though the numbers increase in the final year, compared to the total count of the advertisements, the number of Romanian print ads is much smaller. This could be explained not necessarily through a lack of interest in this type of execution, but through a smaller number of major players in the market as opposed to the other four countries.

Going into more detail, after the distribution based on countries, we revise a classification according to product categories. As mentioned in the design section, these are taken from the Interbrand platform, following international guidelines of assignment (Table 10). The classification is performed in a descending manner, having the arrangement made based on their frequency.

Table 10. Print ads distribution according to product categories

<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Automotive</i>	363	35.9	Retail	37	3.7
<i>Restaurants</i>	170	16.8	Financial services	22	2.2
<i>Technology</i>	93	9.2	Electronics	21	2.1
<i>Media</i>	62	6.1	Apparel	13	1.3
<i>Beverages</i>	60	5.9	Business service	6	0.6
<i>Alcohol</i>	58	5.7	Sporting goods	6	0.6
<i>Luxury</i>	55	5.4	Logistics	5	0.5
<i>FMGC</i>	39	3.9			

Based on the frequencies conceived for the product categories, we can identify the top entries for this period. The first place is occupied by the *Automotive* category with 35.9 percent (363 ads). It indicates that a third of the print advertising of the 2014-2018 period is dedicated to promoting and selling cars or adjacent services. The automotive industry is the one that is most drawn to this type of advertising execution and uses it very frequently. The second place belongs to a fraction of the HORECA industry, more specifically the *Restaurants*. It also had a staggering value of 16.8 percent (170 ads). The fast-food chains are also included in this category, being known for their preference for print advertisements.

The third-place category is *Technology*, with a gradual descent below the threshold, reaching 9.2 percent (93 ads). The fourth place is occupied by a slightly different category among consumer goods: *Media*. It manages to gather 6.1 percent (62 ads) across all five countries. The last two notable groups that are similar in terms of product features, as well as percentages: *Beverages* with 5.9 percent (60 ads) (5.9%) and *Alcohol* with 58 ads (5.7%). These are the most prominent categories, and their distribution is further propagated in terms of brands. As aforementioned, the brands are selected based on the international rankings, yet some of the annual appearances are shadowed by other entries and skipped a year. The categorization of each brand can be viewed below. It is presented together with the numbers of print advertisements (Table 11).

Table 11. Print ads distribution according to brands

No	Brand	Frequency & Percent		No	Brand	Frequency & Percent	
1	McDonald's	143	14.2%	33	Canon	6	0.6%
2	Volkswagen	136	13.5%	34	IBM	6	0.6%
3	Mercedes-B.	51	5%	35	Louis Vuitton	6	0.6%
4	BMW	47	4.7%	36	Netflix	6	0.6%
5	IKEA	37	3.7%	37	Starbucks	5	0.5%
6	Coca-Cola	36	3.6%	38	Panasonic	5	0.5%
7	Heineken	31	3.1%	39	Sony	5	0.5%
8	Spotify	28	2.8%	40	Danone	5	0.5%
9	Disney	27	2.7%	41	FedEx	5	0.5%
10	Gucci	24	2.4%	42	Nescafé	5	0.5%
11	Apple	24	2.4%	43	CISCO	4	0.4%
12	Hermès	23	2.3%	44	Porsche	4	0.4%
13	Samsung	23	2.3%	45	Adidas	4	0.4%
14	Toyota	23	2.3%	46	Gilette	4	0.4%
15	Land Rover	22	2.2%	47	Johnson & J.	4	0.4%
16	KFC	21	2.1%	48	Philips	4	0.4%
17	KIA	22	2.2%	49	Ford	4	0.4%
18	Nissan	21	2.1%	50	Hugo Boss	2	0.2%
19	Facebook	21	2.1%	51	Smirnoff	2	0.2%
20	Pepsi	19	1.9%	52	L'Oréal	2	0.2%
21	Opel	18	1.8%	53	Nike	2	0.2%
22	Colgate	13	1.3%	54	Budweiser	2	0.2%
23	MasterCard	12	1.2%	55	Huawei	2	0.2%
24	Hennessy	12	1.2%	56	Pizza Hut	1	0.1%
25	GAP	11	1.1%	57	Jack Daniel's	1	0.1%
26	Google	10	1%	58	Harley-D.	1	0.1%
27	LEGO	11	1.1%	59	Nintendo	1	0.1%
28	Johnnie W.	10	1%	60	Tiffany & Co	1	0.1%
29	VISA	9	0.9%	61	Discovery	1	0.1%
30	Adobe	9	0.9%	62	PayPal	1	0.1%
31	Honda	7	0.7%	63	Dior	1	0.1%
32	Hyundai	7	0.7%				

After reviewing the major product categories, it is worth looking at the top. Although the category with the most ads is *Automotive*, its most iconic brand, Volkswagen, ranked second, with 13.5 percent (136 ads). It is the brand that promotes most cars through print advertisements, with no other competitor brand coming close to it. The highest position is occupied by McDonald's, surpassing Volkswagen with only seven ads, reaching 14.2 percent (143 ads).

Moreover, the distribution of ads is harmonious across all five countries, not revealing preferences in terms of location. These two brands represent distinctive evolutions, opposed to the other brands in the rankings. They are also the only ones to go beyond the 100 ads threshold.

The third brand is also from the automotive realm, with 5 percent of the total amount (51 ads). Mercedes-Benz is one of the well-represented players of the market, putting under the spotlight the newest features of its products, as well as special offers. It is exceptionally closely followed by the fourth brand in the classification: BMW. It has 4.7 percent (47 ads), with only three executions to separate the two competitors. The fifth-place illustrates quite an unexpected turn of events. It positions itself at only one ad distance from the dominant player, Coca-Cola, and escalates in the top five brands. This brand is IKEA. It gathers 3.7 percent (37 ads) during the five years of analysis, and it is one of the prominent brands in terms of witty copy and design. As mentioned, Coca-Cola is extremely close to the top five, with 3.6 percent (36 ads). All the other brands situate themselves below the limit of 25. However, the majority have one or two executions for each country, providing the proper context of comparison.

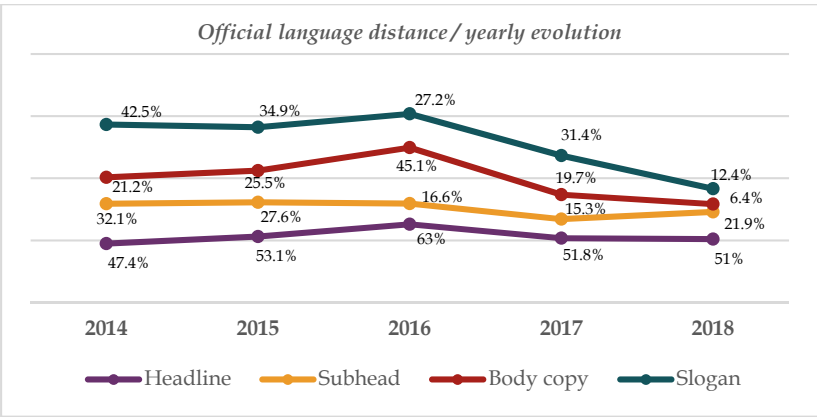
The first step is taken to ensure a thorough endeavor. Two reliability analyses are performed, one for the *official language distance* and one for the *perceived brand globalness* of the copy of the advertisements.

5.2. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE DISTANCE

The first concept we discuss is the *official language distance*. It comprises four elements: the header, the subhead, the body copy, and the slogan. Statistical measurements ³²² are performed to reveal different features of the ad groups. Following the same previous order, the first is the *official language distance*, for the five years of analysis.

The first aspect noticed is that 2018 is distinct from 2014 in terms of language use. Consequently, the years 2014, 2015, and 2016 did not register any significant differences between one another, suggesting similar language use patterns. The same applies to the year 2017, as the last two years (2017 and 2018) seem to share common sequences for copy language. A couple of correlations are performed to grasp more insights into the language evolution based on each year. The common patterns between the final years of analysis are based on the fact that they have the smallest number of advertisements in the global language (English), especially in 2018, rendering negative values. On the other hand, the other three years have positive values, indicating an ascending trend for the English ads. The year 2015 is an exception, not indicating a significant amount of English language ads. The visual representation of the official language distance can be consulted below, split on each copy unit (Graph 2).

³²² The statistical measurements include ANOVAs with Dunett T3 posthoc tests, as well as correlations.



Graph 2. Official language distance/ yearly evolution
(global versus local languages)

The graph depicts the official distance related to the use of the English language in the advertisement. As it can be observed, *the headline* is the element mostly written in English, conforming to the existing trends. The first year of the analysis is the only one in which the numbers do not exceed half of the annual amount, with 47.4 percent (127 ads) in English. However, all the other years increase in numbers. The first finding is that the different copy elements have much lower percentages. None exceeds 50%, indicating that more than half of the advertisements are in local languages.

Furthermore, if 2014, 2015, and 2017 have a rather constant evolution, 2016 and 2018 hint towards specific distinctive models. In 2016 there is a divergent evolution of two of the copy components. It is the year with the highest percentages in terms of English headlines and body copy, with 63 percent (102 ads) for the first and 45.1 percent (73 ads) for the latter. The year 2018, on the other hand, has low points for the body copy and the slogan, the first having 6.4 percent (16 ads) and the second 12.4 percent (31 ads). It indicates a pattern of preferences for local language usage and adaptations. The final year

of analysis takes the general trends on the downslide and reaches the lowest percentages for English language use. It is the year that brings the local languages into the spotlight.

The second round of analyses is performed for the *official language distance* according to countries, based on the main concepts. The United States is different from all the other countries in the analysis and statistically significant in all cases. The UK is the country most similar to the US, with degrees of similarities to Germany, as well. A more considerable gap in terms of language use is noticed in comparison to France and Romania. This finding is linked to the predominant English usage in the UK and German advertisements.

Based on serial correlations, the United States is the most distinct in the group in terms of language use, indicating positive values. It is also the country with a consistent number of ads without textual cues. The two country pairs reveal close resemblances to the US: United Kingdom – Germany, given the regular number of advertisements in English. The France – Romania duo identifies itself as having most ads in the local languages.

Nonetheless, although these pairs of countries indicate a general trend in terms of single languages, there are two categories of advertisements that deserve a closer look: *mixed language ads* and *no copy ads*. These are the executions comprising copy both in the international language and the local one. The rationale behind their usage is most probably linked to the smaller countries seeking to employ foreign languages (such as English) to add a little international flavor to the ad and make it more appealing while preserving local specifics. The Western aura of certain brands increases their credibility level in the relationship with local markets and consumers.

Surprisingly, although it is one of the countries with a consistent number of ads in the local language, Romania also ranks first in terms of language mixes, with 21.7 percent (25 ads). It is a

somewhat controversial tendency. On one hand, it is keen on translating the copy for most of the print advertisements. On the other hand, it is inclined to borrow general formulas vehiculated by brands. The country that has a couple more mixed ads, but had smaller percentages linked to the total amount, is Germany, with 12.1 percent (27 ads). France, however, is a country that preserves the local language, having only 1.8 percent (6 ads).

5.3. PERCEIVED BRAND GLOBALNESS

The second concept that reviews copy cues, as well as visual elements, is the *perceived brand globalness*. The second reliability analysis is performed for the *perceived brand globalness* of the text. The same factors were considered in the previous test.

This concept considers whether certain parts of the copy - catchphrases, references, or wordplays - have been kept the same or not by the brands across the countries, or if the visual cues were the same at a global level or they were differentiated. To see the global-local tendency for the copy dimension, several statistical measurements³²³ are performed to identify how each positioned itself on the global-local spectrum. The five countries are put again into the spotlight.

The United States is the pillar of global references, obtaining the highest score for global tendencies, clearly distinguishing themselves in terms of symbols and expressions. It is the only country that reveals statistical differences compared to other countries.

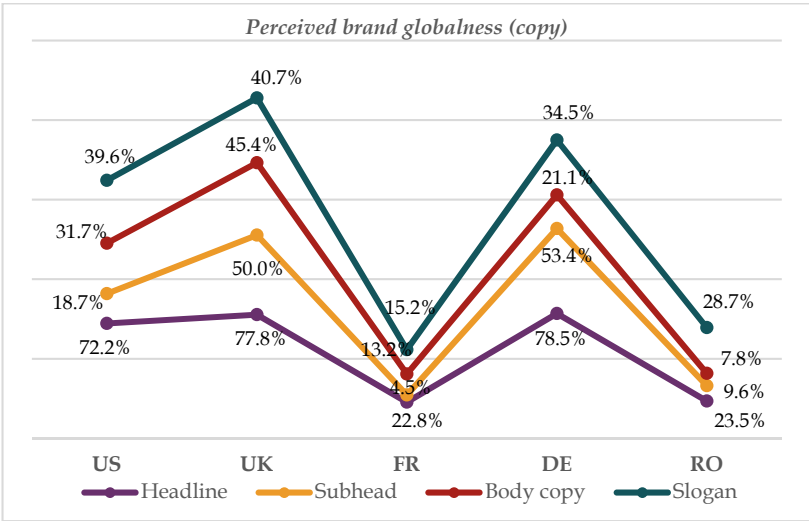
Given the correlations with the perceived brand globalness, the USA revealed a positive tendency. The values are diminished in comparison to the UK or Germany because of the advertisement without a copy. The American executions had most cases of ads

³²³ The statistical measurements include ANOVAs with Bonfferoni posthoc tests, as well as correlations.

without text. After the USA, Germany follows in terms of global influences. Germany has the most numerous examples of copy fragments that are standardized and preserved in the same international campaigns. Thus, it is positioned as being “more global” than the UK, but not by far.

France and Romania, however, are at opposite poles in terms of global appeals. Romania registered smaller scores than France. This phenomenon can be linked to the existence of the aforementioned mixed language ads. A consistent number of Romanian print ads still follow local trends, yet shift the gyroscope toward global trends, as well. Notwithstanding, France left a clear distinctive mark. Besides the preservation of the language for most ads, as seen in the previous analysis, they also put into the spotlight the advertisements that are most differentiated and adapted to the local specifics.

There is 13 percent (131 ads) adjusted to the global trends, having textual or visual elements standardized across countries. Most of them are for the automotive category. For a more in-depth look into the concept, the copy sections of the ads are separated for each country. The graph below serves as a visualization instrument for the number of global or local textual cues used in the ads, tracing the differentiation in the expressions and word plays used, as well as language mixes (Graph 3). We remind the reader that some of the advertisements have no copy. And some do not employ a specific subcategory of copy elements. These subtract a part of the total percent.



Graph 3. *Perceived brand globalness (copy)*

The United States registers the highest numbers, with distinct evolution peaks from the rest of the group. The most numerous elements are the headlines, being present in 72.2 percent (166 ads) of the cases. The rest of the copy elements are not that well represented in the case of the US, with the body copy or slogan being at half of the headlines' value. Given the fact that the other countries also have the highest numbers for this section, it can be affirmed that the main standardization effects can be traced at the headline level. The only exception is Romania which has higher scores for the slogans, indicating that the international campaigns are more prone to maintain it, yet change the other textual elements.

The UK and Germany are somewhat similar in evolution compared to the USA, having 77.8 percent and 78.5 percent for the headlines and the other elements at almost half of the first value. Nevertheless, the English and German advertisements part ways in terms of subheads and by copy. The UK ads have higher values (50 percent, respectively 53.4 percent) than the German ones (45.4 percent,

respectively 21.1 percent), suggesting that the German ads differentiate their ads at a local level through the main content (body copy) of the ad.

The two countries that differentiated their ads the most and adjusted their copy to the roots of the local cultures are France and Romania. Romania is a rather unusual case, as it is the only country that had higher scores for the slogans (28.7 percent) than the headlines (23.5 percent). The two countries also share similar decreasing trends for the subhead and the body copy (4.5 percent, respectively 13.2 percent for France, and 9.6 percent, respectively 7.8 percent for Romania), thus indicating that the main copy of the advertisements follows the local sparks of creativity and reveals the local appeals.

The perceived brand globalness concept also addresses the visual components of the executions. Several analyses ³²⁴ are performed for this dimension as well, considering standardized or differentiated elements in terms of brand identity, as well as the protagonists from the advertisements (whether they are local or international). The comparison is made according to countries. As opposed to the textual dimension, the visual cues generate fewer disparities. There are significant differences between Germany and France, and Germany and Romania. A considerable link is identified for the Germany – USA pair, as well. Contrary to what is expected, this connection implies that France and Romania have the most numerous global spokespersons employed- followed by the USA- while Germany has the lowest number.

Although in terms of copy used, the two countries focus on differentiation, the visual dimensions of the ads reveal unexpected elements. The individuals in the advertisements are, in many cases, internationally known, not representing the local culture. The product categories which have the highest scores are *Media* (with 29 ads),

³²⁴ The statistical measurements include ANOVAs with Dunett T3 posthoc tests, as well as correlations.

Beverages (25 ads), and *Luxury* (19 ads). The only types that do not have any advertisement with an international spokesperson are *Retail* and *Apparel*.

From this point onward, supplementary visual connections can be made with the adjacent variables. The first one reviews the use of brand identity elements. The naming remains the same across all the advertisements, yet the logo suffers slight changes in a small number of cases. France has 17 ads with a modified logo, taking the leading position, followed by Germany with 8 ads. The other countries have 4 ads (UK), one ad (US), or no modified logo ads at all like Romania. The top categories which have the brand identity adjusted are *Technology* (11 ads), *Luxury* (6 ads), and *Alcohol* and *Automotive* (each with 4 ads).

Another important aspect regarding the visual identity is whether the advertisements employ the brand's colors. There is 15.1 percent (153 ads) from the total that apply different colors. This criterion is seemingly not influenced by the previous standardized/differentiated dichotomy, as the brands' color use reveals unexpected results in the country distribution. The one with the highest number of nonconforming materials in France, with 42.5 percent (65 ads). It is closely followed by the USA, with 34.6 percent (53 ads). The other countries have lower thresholds. The third and fourth places are occupied by Germany with 13.7 percent (20 ads) and the UK with 7.8 percent (12 ads). The lowest number of color variation ads belongs to Romania, with only 2 percent (3 ads). The top product categories, as well as top brands that employ different brand colors (Table 12).

Table 12. Different brand colors usage (top 10)

<i>Brand</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No of ads</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Brand</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>No of ads</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Spotify</i>	<i>Media</i>	28	18.3 %	<i>Apple</i>	<i>Technology</i>	9	5.9%
<i>McDonald's</i>	<i>Restaurants</i>	22	14.4 %	<i>KIA</i>	<i>Automotive</i>	9	5.9%
<i>BMW</i>	<i>Automotive</i>	11	7.2%	<i>Land Rover</i>	<i>Automotive</i>	8	5.2%
<i>GAP</i>	<i>Apparel</i>	10	6.5%	<i>Disney</i>	<i>Media</i>	7	4.6%
<i>Volkswagen</i>	<i>Automotive</i>	9	5.9%	<i>Johnnie Walker</i>	<i>Alcohol</i>	6	3.9%

The head position is occupied by Spotify, with 18.3 percent (28 ads). Given the plethora of print ads, McDonald's promotes, it is somewhat natural for the brand to occupy the second position with 14.4 percent (22 ads) and the third place being taken by BMW, with 7.2 percent (11 ads). After a quick glare at the classification, one can notice the recurrent categories which opt for different usage of colors: *automotive* and *media*. Nonetheless, the rest of the groups, as well as most brands, maintain themselves in the brand's color range.

5.4. VISUAL METAPHORS

The third concept that aids the differentiation process of ads is *visual metaphors*. As suggested in the design section, the two main types of ads subsumed to this concept are *congruent* and *incongruent* ads (Table 13). The congruent ads are the ads in which the visual elements reproduce the message literally. Their execution is conventional. The incongruent ads, on the other hand, bring forth unexpected elements and employ metaphors to convey the desired message.

Table 13. Congruent & incongruent ads distribution

Countries	Congruent ads		Incongruent ads				
USA	56	14.6%	174	27.8%	Juxtaposition	140	28.3%
					Synthesis	30	20.1%
UK	42	10.9%	66	10.5%	Juxtaposition	52	10.5%
					Synthesis	14	9.4%
FR	13 1	34.2%	203	32.4%	Juxtaposition	160	32.4%
					Synthesis	56	37.6%
DE	60	15.7%	163	26%	Juxtaposition	122	24.7%
					Synthesis	48	32.2%
RO	94	24.5%	21	3.3%	Juxtaposition	20	4%
					Synthesis	1	0.7%
Total	383 ads		627 ads				

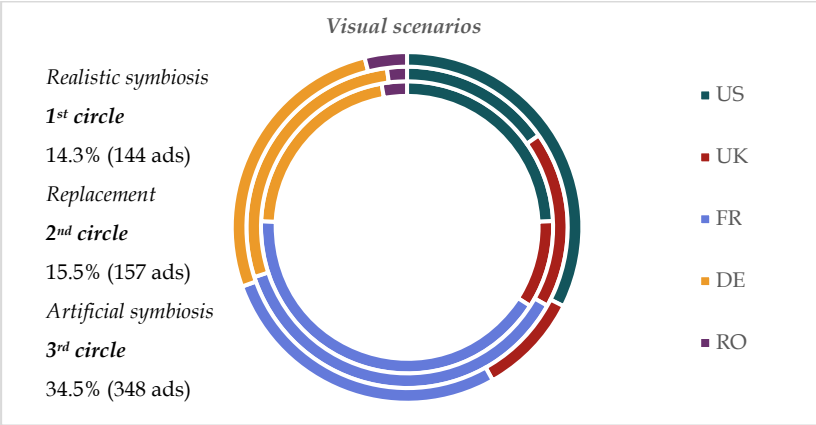
Based on the share of each country for the two categories, the first thing that can be noticed is the increased proportion of incongruent ads. The states with the highest scores for incongruent ads are France (32.4 percent) and the USA (27.8 percent). Even though the numbers are slightly lower, Germany (26 percent) and the UK (10.5 percent) also step forward with a consistent amount. The unexpected turning point appears in the case of Romania (3.3 percent). Not only does it has the lowest percent for the discrepancy, but it also has the most significant differences in terms of incongruent-congruent ads ratio.

Consequently, we look at the categories which have the most incongruent ads. The *automotive* and the *restaurants* ascend to the top positions, the first with 37.2 percent (233 ads) and the second with 22.5 percent (141 ads). Based on the leading categories, an analysis of the brands also reveals two leading names: McDonald's with 19.5 percent (122 ads) and Volkswagen with 15.8 percent (99 ads). Other brands such as IKEA with 5.3 percent (33 ads) or Disney with 4.3 percent come with much lower numbers.

The incongruent ads are further split into *juxtaposition* and *synthesis*. We remind the reader that the first encompasses advertisements

that illustrate the object in its entirety, while the latter focuses on only a part of the product. Although synthesis is usually used in ads to enhance the creative effect, most of the brands opt for juxtaposition, putting the whole product in focus. The countries that made use of synthesis the most are France with 37.6 percent (56 ads) and Germany with 32.2 percent (48 ads). Also, the brands that employ it the most are McDonald's, ranking first with 23.5 percent (35 ads), followed by KIA with 14.1 percent (21 ads). As the number of ads using juxtaposition is increasingly higher, it was expected that the countries with the most ads would be the ones with the highest number of creative ads: France with 32.4 percent (160 ads), and the USA with 28.3 percent (140 ads). The most representative brands for this section are Volkswagen, with 17.8 percent (88 ads), as well as McDonald's with 17.4 percent (86 ads).

The two subcategories are followed by three possible scenarios: *realistic symbiosis*, *replacement*, and *artificial symbiosis*. For each of these subcategories, a point of interest is to see if the country of origin is a decisive element for the final results (Chart 2). The *artificial symbiosis* ranks first with 34.5 percent (348 ads), embodying more than the double amount of the other two scenarios. The *replacement* comes the second, accumulating 15.5 percent (157 ads), while the *realistic symbiosis* counts for 14.3 percent (144 ads). Each scenario has a special section addressing its main traits, dominant country, and brands.



	Realistic symbiosis	Replacement	Artificial symbiosis
US	24.30%	15.30%	33.3%
UK	9.70%	17.80%	9.7%
FR	41.60%	36.90%	28.4%
DE	21.50%	28%	27.3%
RO	2.80%	2%	4.0%

Chart 2. *Visual scenarios distribution*

5.4.1. REALISTIC SYMBIOSIS

The realistic symbiosis reveals an unforeseen kinship between the illustrated elements of the print ad and the product/ service promoted. As explained by the previous graph, the country with executions that use most this scenario is France. It sums up 41.6 percent (60 ads), leading at a far distance from the other countries. The two countries that follow it and are extremely close one to another are the USA with 24.3 percent (35 ads) and Germany with 21.5 percent (31 ads). The United Kingdom has a modest amount of 9.7 percent (14 ads), and the Romanian ads are poorly represented, gathering only 2.8 percent (4 ads).

The category most representative for this type of scenario is *Automotive*, with 40.1 percent (59 ads). Therefore, the auto brands with the most ads are Land Rover (11.1 percent, 16 ads) and Volkswagen (10.4 percent, 15 ads). An example of realistic symbiosis from IKEA can be viewed here (Realistic symbiosis – Ikea: https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/ikea_lamp_0).

It is one of the most representative brands for incongruent executions. The second product category is *Luxury*, at a sensible distance from the first one, but worth noticing ads, with 22.2 percent (32 ads). The illustrative example for this category is the brand Hermès, counting 16 percent (23 ads) of the print mentioned above executions. Another brand worth mentioning in this category has distinguishable appearances through its advertising endeavors: Coca-Cola, with 7.6 percent (11 ads).

5.4.2. REPLACEMENT

The second type of scenario is the *replacement*, representing the instances in which the product has been replaced by an unusual object that would not usually appear in such a context. In the case of countries, the leader, France, maintains its position with 37 percent (58 ads), with only a slight decrease from the previous scenario. The following ranking, however, looks sensibly different from the previous case, as Germany escalates on the second place in the classification, with 28 percent (44 ads), and the third place is occupied by the UK with 17.8 percent (28 ads), showing an increased preference toward the replacement technique. The USA drops on the fourth position, having only 15.3 percent (24 ads). Romania is in the last place, with fewer ads than the previous scenario (2 percent, 3 ads).

The most representative product category for this scenario is *restaurants*, with 42 percent (66 ads). The representative brand for this category is McDonald's, encompassing 36.3 percent (57 ads) from the total. An example of this brand is provided here (Replacement –

McDonald's: https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mcdonalds_pencils).

The *automotive* category ranks second with 37 percent (58 ads). The brand with the most executions is the previous leader, Volkswagen, counting 17.8 percent (28 ads). There is another category worth mentioning for the replacement scenarios: *retail*, having 11.5 percent (18 ads). It is represented by a brand known for using witty associations in its executions and being able to replace products through a wide variety of alternatives: IKEA, with all the 18 ads.

5.4.3. ARTIFICIAL SYMBIOSIS

The *artificial symbiosis* portrays the product by fusing it with an unexpected element within the same ad. The two are placed in the same context, forming a composite image most of the time. It is perceived as the most creative scenario, implying the uncanniest associations. The leading country changed, as the USA ascends with 116 ads (33.3%) using this type of situation. Dethroned, France descends on the second position, revealing its most numerous executions nevertheless of any kind of scenario, with 99 ads (28.4%). The third position is occupied by Germany, gathering 95 ads (27.3%), the most consistent amount for a scenario, also.

Nevertheless, although the countries mentioned above registered a significant increase in numbers, the British ones dropped in the case of this scenario, to 24 ads (6.9%). The Romanian ads remain on the bottom with 14 executions (4%). However, this is the most abundant scenario, having several product categories that were noteworthy, as well as brands. It emphasized the brands' predilection towards artificial symbiosis in terms of print advertisements.

The epitome in terms of categories is *automotive*, leading print executions with 34.2 percent (119 ads). The highest-ranking brand is Volkswagen, counting 17 percent (59 ads). An example of artificial symbiosis use can be viewed here (Artificial symbiosis – Volkswagen:

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/volkswagen_ostrich) . Following a noticeable difference, yet with a considerable number of ads, is the *restaurants* category, with 21 percent (73 ads). The brand with the most ads not only for this category but also for the entire scenario is McDonald's with 18.1 percent (63 ads). Another brand that makes a distinct mark with a handful of advertisements is Disney, clustering 7.5 percent (26 ads) for the *media* sector, followed by the luxury brand Gucci with 5.2 percent (18 ads).

5.5. ADVERTISING TYPES

Another section of the content analysis covers the types of print advertisements, according to their promotional intention. The five categories are split based on the following criteria: *call stimulation*, *product offers*, *price offer*, *reconnecting*, and *reassuring ads*. The group that has plentiful is was *product offer* with 46.3 percent (468 ads), being the most active type of scenario. The following category is *reconnecting ads*, gathering 34.4 percent (347 ads) and followed by the *reassuring ads* that represent 15.7 percent of the total (159 ads).

If the product offer ads are appealing, the *price offer ads* do not acquire the same amount of success in terms of promotion. They represent only 3.4 percent (34 ads) of the total executions. At the opposite end of the spectrum are the *call stimulation ads*, as they account for only 0.2 percent (2 ads). It indicates that these ads are rarely among the brands' preferences, leaving space for the product ads and the reconnection ads to lead the classification.

Table 14. Advertising types (total count)

	No of ads	Percent	Leading country	No of ads	Percent
Product offer ads	468	46.3%	USA	126	26.9%
Reconnect ads	347	34.4%	France	170	48.9%
Reassuring ads	159	15.7%	Germany	59	37.1%
Price offer ads	34	3.4%	Romania	18	53%
Call stimulation ads	2	0.2%	-	-	-

Besides the general aspects and inclinations toward a particular type, each country reveals its preferences for a specific type of ad. The most numerous ads connected to the promotion of products and all their adjacent features belong to the USA, with 26.9 percent (126 ads). And while the American executions reveal an increased preoccupation for putting the product into the spotlight, France focuses on the brand and its relationship with the consumer, revitalizing the relationship with 48.9 percent (170 ads).

Beyond the adage of the German quality, the German ads are the most consistent in the attempt of consoling the consumers regarding the quality of the advocated product or service with 37.1 percent (59 ads). However, besides the consistent number, there is no significant relationship. The Romanian ads are prominent in the context of emphasizing the prices of the products, reflecting the consumers' thirst for a good bargain and accessible values, revealing a significant relationship.

Regarding the product categories, for the product offers, the price offers, and the reassuring print ads, the *automotive* section is the indisputable leader, with Volkswagen and BMW as protagonists. However, the restaurant category regularly appears between these two competitors, with its leading brand, McDonald's. The product offer ads for Volkswagen are 11.5 percent (54 ads), pursued by McDonald's with 9.6 percent (45 ads). The price offer ads are extremely scarce compared to others, gathering only 14.7 percent (5 ads) for the leading BMW. The reassuring ads were similar to the

product offer classifications, having Volkswagen back on the first position with 55 ads (34.6%), followed at less than half of the executions by McDonald's with 15.7 percent (25 ads). The reconnect ads, however, are dominated by the *restaurants* category, McDonald's is the top brand with 21 percent (73 ads). Volkswagen and BMW follow at lower levels at 7.8 percent (27 ads) and the latter at 4.9 percent (17 ads).

5.5.1. THE SALIENCE OF SPACE AND COLORS

There are a couple of extra visual elements that are considered in the analysis, reviewing differentiation aspects strictly in terms of ad execution. We talk about executional details such as the *presence of white space, use of colors, the number of photos (colorized versus black and white, drawings*. These are meant to indicate which are the aesthetical preferences in executions of an ad for each type of category.

The first element is the use of *white space*. It focuses on the print ads, which incorporate white space that enhanced the message meanings. The country that uses most of this technique is France, counting 37.8 percent (87 ads). The following countries are the USA, with 22.2 percent (51 ads), and Germany with 21.3 percent (49 ads). The two bottom positions are occupied by the UK, with 15.2 percent (35 ads), and Romania, with solely 3.5 percent (8 ads). The distribution of these ads indicates a dispersion of the white space usage mainly based on the number of ads, not so much on the countries' preferences. However, an important finding that can be drawn from these numbers is the fact that a small portion of the ads prefers the white space to potentate any given message.

The same could be implied for the *use of colors* in the ads. The distribution of this visual cue is also dictated according to the number of ads for each country. The country with the most executions in France, gaining 32.6 percent (315 ads). The second place is occupied by the USA, with 22.5 percent (217 ads), and the third place by

Germany, with 22 percent (212 ads). The fourth place, however, is occupied by Romania with a higher number than the UK, gathering 11.8 percent (114 ads), while the British ads scored lower with 11.1 percent (107 ads).

In the case of the photos used for the print ads, it is worth noting that the country with the most photo-based ads in France, gathering 32.6 percent (305 ads). The general trend is using just an image, two or more pairs of pictures being a rare encounter. France is followed at a considerable distance by Germany with 22.8 percent (213 ads) and the USA, with 22.2 percent (208 ads). As in the previous case, Romania is placed in the fourth position with 11.6 percent (109 ads), and the UK falls in the last place with 10.8 percent (101 ads). In the case of the *colorized* versus *black & white* photos, the evolution trend is preserved. However, it is worth noting the countries that have a smaller gap of use between the two categories like the USA, which have 19.8 percent (128 colorized ads) and 27.9 percent (102 black and white ads), being the most balanced in terms of both categories.

Another country that has closer usage thresholds for both colorized and black and white photos is Germany, gathering 20.6 percent (133 colorized ads) and 24.7 percent (90 black and white). Nonetheless, the other countries have significantly lower scores for black and white ads. France has 31.5 percent (203 colorized ads), while the black and white ones drop to 35.9 percent (131 ads). The same phenomenon is recorded in the case of the British ads, having 12.4 percent (80 colorized ads), while the black and white are only 7.7 percent (28 ads). The most substantial difference could, however, be noticed in the case of the Romanian ads, having 15.7 percent (101 colorized ads), while the black and white are only 3.8 percent (14 ads). The high number of black indicates greater flexibility and receptiveness from the consumers in terms of advertising executions.

The most striking extremes can be found in the case of the illustrations employed in the print ads. All the countries have less than

ten-print ads with more than one illustration. Unexpectedly, the country that has the most ads with multiple drawings is Romania, representing 42.1 percent (8 ads). Moreover, the general appeals are toward using black and white illustrations instead of colorized ones. For all the analyzed countries, the black and white numbers are higher. France is once again the leader with 33 percent (223 ads), while the colorized ones are 32.8 percent (111 ads). The country in the second position is Germany, clustering 20.7 percent (140 ads), while the colorized ones are 24.8 percent (83 ads). Romania ranks fourth, revealing again the most significant discrepancy between the black and white illustrations, found in 14.5 percent (98 ads), versus 5.1 percent (17 ads). The UK records 11.6 percent (78 ads), compared to 9 percent (30 ads). Thus, in the case of print advertising, the preferences for illustrations are inclined towards black and white executions.

5.5.2. INCONGRUENT ELEMENTS

The last section of the content analysis codebook assesses qualitative data regarding incongruent details of the print ads. These insights are meant to indicate certain particularities engaged in the conception stages of the ads and linked to the previously reviewed concepts. The first insight is connected to the *alcohol* category, where the brand name has been replaced with unusual characters. The rationale behind this creative gesture is inducing the consumer the impression of ebriety and loss of clear-thinking skills, to raise awareness about drinking and driving. Apart from the responsible consumption campaigns, this category is also a witness to some of the most daring visual associations, combining the alcohol bottle with a cake symbol and providing plentiful material for the artificial symbiosis scenario.

For the *fast-moving consumer goods* category (FMGC), there are also uncanny adaptations, revealing the category's flexibility in terms of idea fusion. Associations such as a mouth transformed into a

battlefield for personal care products or shaving face contours on the consumer's chest are in order. These goods also imply toys, paving the way to numerous creative adaptations. One in particular that suits the parents' imagination, is recreating art masterpieces using toys components (e.g., Lego:

https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/lego_leonardo). The art references are compelling in the case of the *luxury* category, revealing high settings to match the products promoted. The *FMGC* category is marked by a particular pattern, having multiple products advertised in a single ad. More than this, they are perfectly aligned, inducing a sense of order. The use of products is a common practice for the *technology* category as well, as household objects are depicted using various products. This category also follows the previous approach, using the protagonists' faces as a canvas for tribal digital drawings. Another specific technique is illustrating the ad from the product's perspective. Humanizing it and offering it a more personal touch. In the same realm of personifying products, the financial category focuses on transposing its services into emotion, better empathizing with the consumers.

The visual distortions are successfully used for the *automotive* category. The executional alternatives involve composing auto motives from words or having written letters made of driving scenarios. There are also optical illusions used to illustrate the cars' features or the ad zoomed in on detail to envision uncanny destinations for consumers craving for adventure. Placing cars in unusual settings is a common practice. For the auto service promotion, there are representations involving letters made of car parts and replaced by rusty ones or warning systems that are replaced with opera singers. Or the parking during rain that is depicted as a storm on the sea. In the case of unpredictable associations, this category witnesses body copy in Latin for the appealing of the upper class or using elephants to induce the thresholds of resistance of the product.

Another category that makes use of incongruent elements at their full potential is *electronics*. The products' multiple-use could be transformed into several alternatives. The ideas are simple yet powerful in meaning. For the cameras, the photos taken in the dark are presenting the protagonists, revealing the same quality as the photos taken during the day. A bold approach implies creating the ad based on images perceived by a blind photographer. The gaming gadgets are promoted through metaphors, blending several symbols: the Batman sign replaced with gaming consoles or light indicators envisioned with a moon.

Other household appliances such as vacuums gained science-fiction nuances, as the product's characteristics are reproduced through the image of a black hole or headphones illustrating a singer's performance through sound waves, capturing all the high and low notes (e.g. Panasonic: https://www.adsoftheworld.com/media/print/panasonic_michael). For the *retail* category, there is a strong emphasis put on cultural features. It either illustrates cultural exchanges by fusing people's preferences and products, or it conceived genealogical trees with the help of bed photos. The artistic accents can also be identified in the case of beverages, where two hands (of different people from different races) reach out and share the product, promoting multiculturalism.

A category that rivals the automotive in terms of exceptional connections is *restaurants*. From abstract illustrations indicating roads that lead to restaurants, to substituting the products with everyday objects for revealing habits, to using beaming lights to illustrate outcomes, this category expands the executional ideas and messages to all the creative corners. It even transforms crowded and unattractive spaces such as metro stations into a simulacrum of a restaurant. It also exploits white space and manages to illustrate insights by promoting the products through empty packaging. Its absence accentuates the qualities.

Besides the visual cues, the incongruent elements can also be identified in the copy. Certain print ads downsize their visual elements, unleashing the power of copy. Many environmental campaigns make use of wordplays and witty expressions to get their message across. Other ads focus on the storytelling component, employing a particular long copy. Although this practice is rare in new ads, in some well-chosen contexts, it captures the consumers' attention. Some of them are conceived as poems, some as manifestos, and some as creeds.

5.6. CONCLUDING IDEAS FROM THE FOURTH PART

This section offers an overview of the general insights from the content analysis, connecting the essential dots. The red thread will be unfolded as each research question and hypothesis are reviewed. We will begin with the first set of questions:

RQ1. What is the official language distance in the print ads?

One of the primary distinctions between the local and global settings is dictated by language. The headlines are solely the ones conceived in the English language, with 52.5 percent. The rest of the copy sections, however, indicates smaller percentages: the subheads having 24 percent, the body copy 22 percent, and the slogan 30 percent. The overall numbers show the dominance and revulsion of local languages. These are studied according to two directions: the evolution in time and the countries implicated in the analysis.

RQ1.1. What is the official language distance according to years?

The overall evolution, according to the years, uncovers an unforeseen distribution. The first three years of the analysis reveal similar patterns, suggesting at first that the English language dominates the whole period. The peak is the year 2016. Despite that, the years 2017 and 2018 reverses the entire ranking, witnessing the ascent of the local languages. The year 2018 is illustrative in this case.

RQ1.2. What is the official language distance according to countries?

The countries are also a variable that shifts the trends of the analysis. The states with the highest scores for the global language are by default the USA, UK, while the surprising appearance is Germany. Consequently, the ones who break the pattern are France and Romania. Their low scores for the distance toward the global language indicate an increased quantity of ads in the local languages. These two countries prove to be keen on preserving the local languages for the executions, reducing the gap between brands and consumers.

H1. The countries with smaller scores for the official language distance tend to have most ads in the local languages.

The same principle applies in the case of this hypothesis. The calculated scores for the official language distance indicate the countries which use most the international language (English) for each copy section of the ad. The ones who handle most of the local languages are France and Romania, confirming the hypothesis.

RQ2. What is the perceived brand globalness of the ads?

We bring into discussion the concepts of standardization/differentiation, as we analyze a consistent number of international print advertisements. Given the fact that the focal point is global brands, it is only natural to expect a significant amount of standardized executions. Nonetheless, the results indicate and confirm the ideas from the literature, as differentiation is more employed than standardization. Only 13 percent of the ads had textual or visual elements standardized across countries, the rest of 87 percent of the international campaigns opting for the adaptation and change of messages according to the cultural specifics. Thus, the perceived brand globalness of the sample leans toward the *differentiation* side of the spectrum.

RQ2.1. What is the perceived brand globalness according to countries?

As expected, the USA is the epicenter of global trends. The analysis reveals that the country that follows it is Germany, with the most standardized campaigns. The United Kingdom follows it in the third place, given its linguistic advantages, as well. However, the most differentiated ads belong to France and Romania, with France being the illustration of differentiation in advertising executions and being the farthest from the USA.

H2. The countries with smaller scores for the perceived brand globalness tend to have the most differentiated and locally adapted print ads.

This principle perfectly applies to the two atypically evolving countries, France, and Romania, that obtain the lowest scores for the perceived brand globalness. The large scores indicate the states with the most standardized ads, similar to the American ones. The two countries have the most differentiated and locally adapted ads, confirming the second hypothesis.

RQ3. Are the visual scenarios from the ads congruent or incongruent in most ads?

To the delight of many consumers and advertisers, on the same part, most of the print ads are incongruent. This suggests that the creative endeavors could be noticed in most of the ads, as the visual or textual metaphors dominate the advertising landscape in 62 percent of the ads.

RQ3.1. Which type of incongruity is most prevalent?

There are three types of possible scenarios for the incongruent print ads: realistic symbiosis, replacement, and artificial symbiosis. Among all, the artificial symbiosis comes out as first, with 34.5 percent of the executions. It indicates an intense preoccupation with unusual and unexpected associations.

H3. A high number of incongruent print ads is a predictor of the artificial symbiosis scenario.

This hypothesis implies that a large number of incongruent ads indicate a preference for the artificial symbiosis, as it is considered

to be the most creative scenario, and it favors the most significant associations, being preferred by most brands. This hypothesis is also confirmed, this scenario being the most recurrent.

RQ4. Is the same copy used in several countries by the same brand in the same year?

The practice of using the same copy declined. Most countries prefer the conception of their messages, not employing the original. The best examples, in this case, are France and Romania again. However, Romania is a more peculiar case. It is due to the fact it reveals some paradoxical tendencies. Although most print ads are in Romanian and have different adaptations as a general rule, there are mixed language ads. Most of them have the headline in English and it is preserved from the international campaigns, while the rest of the ad is differentiated. It indicates a fusion of intent between maintaining the local specifics while aspiring to global values, specific to transitioning countries.

RQ5. Which type of ad is most used?

There are also five ad types, based on their scope: call stimulation ads, product offer ads, price offer ads, reconnect ads, and reassuring ads. The majority of the ads are the product offer ones, with 46.3 percent, revealing the fact that the central point of the promotion process is exposing the products' best features.

RQ6. Which are the categories which have the most print executions, and which ones have the least?

The two categories which dominate the five years are automotive and restaurants. These are the leaders for each year of analysis, the first representing 36 percent of the total amount, while the latter is 16.8 percent. The two categories are also the providers of the most uncanny and spectacular executions in terms of copy and visuals. The groups which use the least print ads as a means of digital promotion are business service and sporting goods with 0.6 percent ads and logistics with 0.5 percent. Besides these three, the wide variety

of categories that employs print ads, from luxury and automotive to restaurants and beverages, indicates that this type of advertising execution is still desired. Especially as the last year of the analysis, 2018, recorded a significant rise in the total amount of print executions, thus indicating high interest from the brands.

H4. The countries are constant in their evolution regarding standardized or differentiated approaches toward print ads over the years.

The first hypothesis suggests that once a country sets its tendency toward standardization or differentiation, it maintains this trend during the whole period. Albeit the standardized ads are scarce, the tendencies could have been recorded. Based on the tests performed for each unit of copy and the evolution according to each year, it can be said that the countries are constant in this matter. All the states have a regular number of standardized ads. Moreover, each year has Germany and UK are relatively close to the USA, while France and Romania are always on the opposite side. And the Romanian ads have mixed language ads from the beginning to the end of the period. Thus, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

PART 6

DISCOVERING THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE IN PRINT ADS

The experimental section is complementary to the content analysis in the sense of testing in-depth the impact of one of the main concepts: the official language distance. This is done through a survey-based experiment. It is the appropriate method to complement the previous results, as it aided the appraisal of this concept on consumers ³²⁵. As previously illustrated in the literature, the consumer wants to be challenged at deciphering executions and be appreciated for his effort to understand the message.

It is a survey-based experiment on 154 participants. The rationale behind its choice is connected to the fundamental roles of this method: determining the cause and effect of one of the earlier mentioned concepts on potential consumers ³²⁶. The experiment is a fitting choice, involving the projection of an intervention based on the results from the content analysis ³²⁷. The reaction of a sample of consumers to one of the pre-studied concepts offers additional insight.

This approach relies on its capacity to point toward explicit causal assertions ³²⁸. In literature, it is perceived as a “golden standard” for measuring the precise impact of the variables ³²⁹. Besides the correlations made in the case of the content analysis, the experiment comes as a reasonable supplement, indicating the effects the advertisements have on consumers, based on languages. The main focus is identifying the effect of the local language copy versus the English one on the participants.

³²⁵ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*.

³²⁶ Bryman.

³²⁷ Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS*.

³²⁸ Lewis-Beck, Bryman, and Liao.

³²⁹ Pituch and Stapleton, “Hierarchical Linear and Structural Equation Modeling Approaches to Mediation Analysis in Randomized Field Experiments.”

6.1. THE PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED

The sample is formed of 154 undergraduate students, from the Advertising specialization. The biased aspects regarding their academic profile are considered from the beginning. Nonetheless, this ensures a similar background of the participants. The group that received the English ad had 52 participants (33.8 percent), the Romanian group with 52 (33.8 percent), and the control group with 50 (32.5 percent). The overall gender distribution is slightly unbalanced, having 69.5 percent female respondents and 30.5 percent male respondents. However, we ensured an even distribution across groups, so the randomization check is valid.

Most of them fit in the 18-21 age category (77.9 percent), followed by the 22-25 group (20.8 percent). There are only two respondents in the 26-30 category (1.3 percent), but given the small numbers, this category is not considered. The age randomization also generates good results. Although the fact they are students is a limit of the experimental design, they are chosen as the age range is proper for the established brand. In this group, only three declared not eating fast food due to its unhealthy dimension; however, wished to take part in the experiment, as they follow this category's advertising.

A self-assessment scale is used to measure their proficiency. The scale included split levels for listening, reading, speaking, and writing, with the following thresholds: beginner, advanced, and expert. The necessary statistical measurements³³⁰ are performed, indicating that the groups were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency. Additionally, more than half of the participants rate themselves as experts for listening (54.5 percent) and reading (58.4 percent). They perceive themselves as advanced when it comes to producing English materials in terms of speaking (48.7 percent) or

³³⁰ The measurements include reliability analyses and ANOVAs.

writing (47.4 percent). Except for speaking where 15 percent considered themselves as beginners, more than 80 percent of the respondents believe they are in the advanced or the expert categories.

6.2. DESIGN AND MEASURING DIMENSIONS OF THE ADS

We first revise the main concepts used in this section, with the adjacent scales employed in the development of the research instruments: *the attitude toward the brand*, *attitude toward the ad*, *purchase intention*, and *symbol value of the foreign language*. The analysis is conceived from general to specific. Hence, the first scale used is the *attitude toward the brand*. The relationship with the brand is the general frame that offers a couple of initial cues to the consumers.

This concept evaluates the individual's subjective interpretation of the brand. It is the one that reinforces the behavior, being in close connection to the purchase intention. To unwrap it, Spears & Singh ³³¹ researched the literature and found multiple attributes that describe how the consumer may perceive the brand based on advertising executions. The initial set is composed of 31 items. However, after the refinement of the studies, they enclosed everything to a set of 5 pairs of opposing features. These range from 1 to 7, from the least desirable to the most craved ones. The couples are unappealing – appealing, bad – good, unpleasant – pleasant, unfavorable – favorable, unlikeable – likable.

The second concept is *purchase intention*. It came as a continuation of measuring the impact of the brand because it reveals personal impulses concerning the brand. It illustrates the (favorable) aware intent of an individual to purchase the brand's product. The scale is also conceived by Spears & Singh ³³².

³³¹ "Measuring Attitude Toward the Brand and Purchase Intentions."

³³² (2004)

The principle of opposing terms is preserved. It divides the intent into four stages, determining the consumer to place its preferences according to different degrees. The need to split them into multiple levels acknowledges the fact that this concept cannot be assessed on a yes-no basis; it needs to be nuanced. In this case, the attempt to purchase is analyzed based on language use. It ranges between the following items: never – definitely, very low purchase intent – high purchase intent, definitely not buying it – definitely buying it, probably not buying it – probably buying it.

The third concept is the *attitude toward the ad*. It is in direct connection to the products envisioned in the ad. It is conceived by Olney, Holbrook, and Batra in 1991. Attitude presumes more than a monolithic and unidimensional estimate of a general effect. The characteristics which offer the ad its unique and compelling properties should be treated separately, not mixed into a singular item. Hence, a five-item scale is conceived.

There are five pairs of items for each specific component of the ad, with three dimensions considered. The first is dedicated to entertainment, revealing the unusual traits of the material. The second revolves around the usefulness of the information conveyed about the product. The third one focuses on the interestingness of the information, emerging from the curiosity of the consumer. All these encompass the study of conceivably altering detectable effects. Combined, they result in the following extremes: ordinary – peculiar, just like any other ad – different from any other commercial, average – special, normal – weird, nothing special – outstanding.

The final scale is dedicated to the *symbol value of the foreign language*. It is a new construct. Although the literature assigns a generous amount of research for language, it is only until more recent studies emerged and polished a multidimensional role in advertising.

The scale is developed by van Hooft, van Meurs, and Spierts ³³³. It uncovers the perception of the consumers toward the language employed in the ad.

The scale embodies several dimensions, as well. It reveals perceptions linked to aspects such as attractiveness, superiority, affect, and behavior. These are all related to the context of the communicative environment. This scale examines the language approaches explicitly associated with advertising. The general language demeanor is analyzed, as these attitudes are the ones that generally dictate the consumers' attitude toward the language employed in the ads.

Table 15. Scales and measurements used in the experimental design

<i>The attitude toward the brand (Spears & Singh, 2004)</i>								
Unappealing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Appealing
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
Unpleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Pleasant
Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable
Unlikeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Likeable
<i>Purchase intention (Spears & Singh, 2004)</i>								
Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Definitely
Very low purchase intent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	High purchase intent
Definitely not buying it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Definitely buying it
Probably not buying it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Probably buying it
<i>The attitude toward the ad (Olney et al., 1991)</i>								
Ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Peculiar
Just like any other ad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Different from any other ad
Average	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Special
Normal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Weird
Nothing special	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Outstanding
<i>Symbol value of the foreign language (van Hooft et al., 2017)</i>								

³³³ "In Arabic, English, or a Mix? Egyptian Consumers' Response to Language Choice in Product Advertisements, and the Role of Language Attitudes."

Modern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
International	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Young	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A symbol of urban growth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
A prestige marker	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sign of technological superiority	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

To test the impact of these dependent variables on the consumers, we employed these scales. We devised a special section for each of the concepts, to help visualize the main results regarding the groups, as well as significant relationships with other variables.

The hypotheses for this section are derived from these scales used in the experiment:

Table 16. Hypotheses for the experiment

Official language distance (Language impact)	H1.	The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the attitude toward the brand.
	H2.	The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for purchase intention.
	H3.	The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the attitude toward the ad.
	H4.	The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the symbol value of the foreign language.

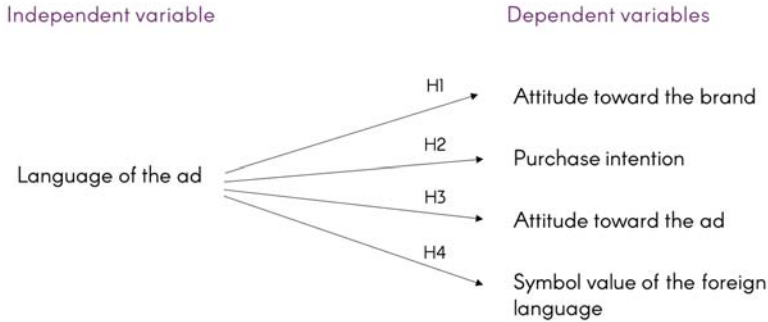


Image 1. *The conceptual model of the experimental design*

A short pretest ensured two criteria: (1) the product grants a range of traits for the experimental manipulation and (2) the product is relevant to the sample³³⁴. The brand chosen is KFC. The fact that it is a known brand represents a small impediment, as they already have preexisting opinions formed. On the other hand, its popularity among the target group ensures an authentic endeavor. The choice is based on the frequent consumption among participants. Given the fact, there is a pre-existing relationship of participants with the brand, three additional variables were considered from the beginning. The first variable is *the preference for the product category*, as this group has by default certain representations in the consumers' perception. The second one is *the preference for the used brand*. It is in direct connection to the chosen brand. The third variable considered is *the preference for ads in English*. It is a critical variable, as well, as the inclination toward the ads in the English language could have influenced the results.

The three concepts are tested after viewing the stimuli, to examine whether one of these factors could have a more substantial influence than the language per se. In case the language would not render significant results, these are meant to support and test the four

³³⁴ Kao, Wu, and Yu, "The Impact of Construal Level on Brand Preferences: Ad Metaphors and Brand Biography as Moderators," 55.

dependent variables: *the attitude toward the brand, the purchase intention, the attitude toward the ad, and the symbol value of the foreign language.*

It is a 1x3 experimental design. The independent variable is the language used in the ads' copy. There are two experimental groups and a control one. The impact of differentiation in terms of language is tested through three visual materials that have a standardized copy. The first experimental group views an ad with a copy in English, while the second view an ad with a copy in Romanian. The control group receives an ad without text.

The fidelity of the experiment is ensured by measuring the four dependent variables through the scales from the literature. The fluctuation of these four concepts indicates the overall closeness or distance regarding the language employed in the ads.

There are a couple of initial tests performed to see whether there are also significant connections between the three extra concepts and the groups. The participants are asked to rate how appealing is this *product category*. The groups are homogeneous in terms of preferences. Most of their answers correspond to an *agreement* or *partial agreement with* the section. The two experimental groups have 35.2 percent of participants, and the control one has 29.7 percent.

Moreover, they are questioned which are their favorite fast-food chains. The data is also gathered with the intent of discovering the reason why the restaurants they chose are favorites. It was critical to have this information to interpret the results accurately. The leading brand indisputably is KFC (75.3 percent). It is closely followed by its main competitor, McDonald's, with 74.6 percent. It also surpasses local fast-food chains, thus indicating that the scale results are powerfully influenced by the brand choice for the experimental materials. Among the most frequent reasons invoked for choosing KFC are the quality of the products and the unique recipes coupled with their taste. Given the fact the participants are students, the affordability of the products was also mentioned. There are also social

dimensions involved, such as the fact that the KFC venues are a gathering place for friends, and that their friends recommend it as being “cool.” The popularity of the brand is mentioned exceptionally often.

Additional information is collected about their consumption behavior, identifying how often they eat fast food products. The groups have similar consumption patterns, the results not exhibiting any significant effects. Most of the participants prefer eating once a month fast food products, with 28.1 percent for the English ad group, 39 percent for the Romanian ad group, and 32.8 percent for the control group. A consistent number of the participants (33.8 percent) declare eating weekly fast-food products, supporting once more the popularity of the chosen brand.

They are also inquired how appealing the advertisements are in English. This measure, however, reveals significant results. After an in-depth look into the results, it is revealed that the language used in the ads or its absence, as in the case of the control group, influences their overall perception. Tests³³⁵ are performed for the preference for ads in English, to retrieve the differences according to groups. The significance could be observed among all three groups.

The explanation of this phenomenon resides in the possible effect the employed language might have on the consumer at the moment of viewing the ad. Regarding the *preference for the English language ads* variable, the English language group rated highest this variable, with maximum scores received from 48.7 percent of the group. However, the Romanian ad group admits enjoying less the English language ads, with only 21.15 percent. And they appreciate them the least, with only 8 percent of the participants being enthusiastic about them.

³³⁵ The statistic measurements include ANOVAs and ANCOVAs.

The reason for opting for standardized visuals, in this case, is ensuring internal validity. The sole variable supporting changes in the three instances is the copy. The attempt to maintain external validity is made through the visual manipulation of the material so that it looks almost identical to the original print ad.

After viewing the stimulus material, the subjects are exposed to a manipulation check, being asked to indicate the language used in the ad. All the participants in the Romanian ad, and English ad groups correctly identify the language. In the control group, 94 percent mentioned there is no copy. Two of the participants chose, however, the Romanian language and one English. There is an explanation box provided, and they mentioned that they consider that English is the default language, thus revealing the potential impact of previous advertisements of the brand.

6.2.1. THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRAND

It is the first dependent variable measured³³⁶, revealing how the variables influenced the perceptions about the brand. The results, however, indicate only a tendency regarding language influence. Between the Romanian and the English ad groups, there is no significant connection identified. Neither among the Romanian ad group nor the control group. However, there are notable changes between the English and the control group. It is not significant, yet it indicates some differences worth exploring.

It can be linked to the previous findings that suggest that their preference for a specific language is influenced by its presence in the ad. There is no compelling liaison between the language used in the ads and the attitude toward the brand.

³³⁶ The statistic measurements include reliability analyses, ANOVAs, linear regressions, and correlations.

For the ads in English, the findings in the previous section reveal differences between the three groups. It indicates a significant relationship between the two, suggesting that an increased preference for the English language ads increases the overall attitude toward the brand. It shows an especially important finding, as the English ad group is the one with the highest level of the propensity for an international language. It could be explained by the participant's perception of the English copy as being more natural and fitting for a global brand such as KFC and coupled, also, with their age range, which makes them more receptive to English messages.

As expected, this relationship is more reliable, as their attitude toward the brand rises if their preference for the product category is also high. And this is also confirmed by the frequent eating patterns. The preference for the product category proves to be one of the strongest predictors for the attitude toward the brand. Given the fact that the participants are staunch devotees of fast-food products, it is expected that their opinion is increasingly higher.

Another correlation is performed with the brand employed in the experiment and how appealing the participants perceive it to be. It suggests, as in the previous case, that the more they feel attracted to the brand which advertises and the more popular they perceive it to be, the more they resonate with it.

The slightly smaller values than the previous section might seem unexpected at first glance, as one might expect the brand to be the most potent predictor, given the fact it is the leading brand. Nevertheless, we remind the reader that McDonald's is also extremely present among their preferences. And, as the participants themselves state, their attraction is toward the entire fast-food category and the uniqueness of certain products, not so much the brands.

6.2.2. PURCHASE INTENTION

The second concept, with its subsequent scale, is intricately connected to the previous one, as the relationship with the brand determines the purchase intention of the product. Several tests ³³⁷ are performed, as well. Of course, an aspect must be stated from the beginning. A possible limitation of the results in this section is derived from the fact that the purchase intention is a construct that necessitates a more extended period for installment in the consumers' minds. It is thus highly probable that the answers of the consumers are based on their previous relationship with the brand, not a singular ad.

Looking at the three groups, the first noticeable aspect is that, although insignificant, the Romanian ad group presents the most differences from the English ad group and the control one. The Romanian-English groups' pair is quite similar, while the Romanian-control groups' couple suggests there are more substantial discrepancies.

It implies that the purchase intention is not influenced by the language of the copy or its absence. The language manipulation in the ads did not have any impact on their purchase intention.

Despite that, the correlation between the preference for English language ads and the purchase intention indicates a significant connection. It suggests and reinforces previous ideas. Those who find appealing the ads in English are also more prone to acquire the product. Since this scale is strongly linked to the previous one, the significant results in the regression reinforce their connection. Increased perception of the brand in the group with a heightened preference for the English language ads leads to a high probability of purchase intention.

³³⁷ The statistic measurements include reliability analyses, ANOVAs, linear regressions, and correlations.

Another relation which deems significant is the one between the product category preference and the purchase intention. It is also a particularly meaningful connection. If the product category is viewed as highly attractive, as in the case of this experiment, the purchase intention is exceptionally close to happening. The product category reveals itself once again as the most crucial determinant, being of utter importance and counting for almost half of the decision to purchase the product.

The last association is made between brand preference and the scale. The correlation reveals a more substantial relationship than the previous dimension. The preference for the brand uncovers a significant impact on purchase intention. It has been expected, as the choice of the products at the moment of acquisition is dictated by the range of the brand (not so much its values).

It comes as no surprise, as the preference of the brand always dictates the initial purchases. In this case, as pointed out earlier in the process, the fact that KFC is the leading brand in the participants' preference is reflected in their choices. This scale also indicates that in the product category and the brand's case, others have a decisive role in influencing the consumer's decision.

6.2.3. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE AD

The third concept focuses on the ad itself. It reviews how the participants perceived the print ad and which are the elements of impact. Based on the measurements³³⁸, similar to the previous concept, the Romanian ad group has the most differences in comparison to the English ad group or the control one. In this case, the differences between the Romanian group are almost equal in

³³⁸ The statistic measurements include reliability analyses, ANOVAs, linear regressions, and correlations.

relationship to the other two groups. And the English ad group and the control one are again the most alike.

The fact that the groups are similar in their answers and the lack of relationship between the two implies that the language does not make a print ad necessarily more appealing. Nor does the lack of copy. Still, when looking at the relationship between the preference for the English language and the attitude toward the ad, the numbers indicate a closer connection. It is not a significant result, but this link is more vivid than the previous one.

One of the possible explanations for this is that in the evaluation of a sole ad, the general preference for ads in English is not a significant factor. It is more important in the public perception of a brand and its executions, as well as the purchase intention, which is driven by individual messages.

The preference for the product category did, however, reveal exciting results. Although it is not such a secure connection, the significance threshold is suitable. It implies that participants' attitude toward the ad was notably influenced by their preference for the product category. The attraction for the product category is likely to ensure a positive attitude regarding the ad, beyond its textual cues. This attraction does not prove to be as powerful as in the case of the first scale. Indeed, the product category is the first significant dimension to influence the perception of an ad. Nevertheless, it is not as powerful as the connection with the attitude toward the brand.

Albeit the other factors, the one that renders the most significant results is the preference for the brand. It reveals an essential link to the attitude toward the ad. The more the participants relate to the brand, the more it influences their perception regarding the print executions. Once again, it is shown that the most promising variable of the ad is the brand itself. It is the dimension with the most impact on the perception of the consumers regarding the ad.

Surprisingly, in the case of the ad itself, the participants did not rate as important the language of the copy. Moreover, the preference of the English ads that prove to be of impact in the case of the previous scales, leaves room for the product category and the brand to influence the participants' overall perception of the print advertisement.

6.2.4. SYMBOL VALUE OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The final scale had as the central focus the language. It revealed how the two languages are perceived by the participants, whether the English language is viewed as modern and dynamic and whether the Romanian language follows it or places itself at an opposing end. It also had consistently more items than the previous scales. The statistic measurements are performed for this concept, as well.

It is the first scale that reveals the impact of languages. Looking into the differences between the groups, the following relations emerged. The Romanian ad group did not differ from the control group. Neither did the English ad group differ much from the control one, having a smaller value than the Romanian one. The significant differences appear in the case of the Romanian-English pair.

The items on this scale indicate a clear split between languages for particular things. At an in-depth look, the English language ad is perceived as more modern (30.8 percent), young (53.8 percent), and international (80.7 percent). The Romanian ad scores are lower for these dimensions, not being perceived as the hype and energetic by this age category. The language in the ad influences these dimensions.

It was anticipated that the correlation between the preference for the English language ads and the symbol value of the foreign language to retrieve significant results. It reinforces the previous idea, implying that a heightened attraction for the English language ads provides increased scores for its symbolic value. There is a direct relationship between the use of the English language and the

perception of the modernity of the ad. The ad which has the English copy is perceived as more youthful, international, and is a sign of urban growth.

The product category also proves to be a significant factor in the relationship with the scale. The preference for the promoted product category increases the positive perception of the employed language. A linear regression confirms the connection between the two variables. As probably expected, the product category remains significant, fulfilling a pattern. Yet, as the focus fell on the copy of the ad, it is somewhat natural to be of secondary importance in this case. There is a compelling relationship between the symbol value of the language and the product category, as the attraction for the products tends to put in good light the message through which they are being promoted.

The brand preference is also a reliable indicator of a high symbol value of language. The results indicate a significant relationship. The favorite brand increases the likelihood of having positive perceptions of the language. Still, the relationship with the brand preference is less potent in the case of the symbol value of the foreign language than the previous scale. As the scale solely focuses on the nature of the copy, it is expected for the product category and brand to be of smaller significance.

6.3. ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

As experiments are a sensitive method that involves, at times, problematic procedures, the ethical dimensions of the subject are also addressed before the research endeavor. Before filling in answers in the survey, the participants are informed regarding data collection about them, as well as the anonymity of the provided solutions. Even though the real scope of the experiment is not divulged until the end of the entire process, the participants ran through each step, so they knew what they should expect. It is the standard procedure, and they knew there are no harmful operations.

After the completion of the task, they are debriefed regarding the nature of the experiment, as well as the purpose of visual manipulation of materials. The main subject of the paper could be framed as a light issue, not representing an undermining of their beliefs or inflicting traumatic experiences. The content of the ads is also PG-rated, not inducing, or inciting violent, sexual, or any other kind of inappropriate behavior. The brand is one with which they are familiar and use it on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. The completion time of the survey is also around 15-20 minutes, not straining or putting the participants in any stressful conditions. The completion took place online, so the participants had the benefit and comfort of their chosen locations.

There are no children or elderly involved in the process. No materials unsuitable for underage person has been used, and none of the participants in the study is underaged. Also, there are no references that could bring harm to any of these involved categories. There are also no gender or racial references in any of the materials or questions employed.

All the materials employed in the experimental section represent a graphical manipulation solely with the means of using them during the experiment are not the original work of the KFC brand. Also, any other material used in the present paper is taken from official digital platforms and can be consulted at any given time, being open to general access. Also, the source of each image has been mentioned, and credentials go to the original authors and the platforms that promote their work.

6.3.1. CONCLUDING IDEAS FROM THE FIFTH PART

Regarding the official language distance concept, the experiment reveals that the English language is the most preferred one. For a brand that tries to be of interest to the 18-21 age group, the international language is the one that makes these consumers

resonate. However, based on the results, a high language distance should not be so much of an interest for a brand. Especially an international one. This age group is not so sensitive to the presence or absence of the copy. The popularity of the brand and its social implications are of much higher importance than the message. And, of course, the preference for the product category.

The most significant variables are the brand and the product category. They are followed by the preference for the English language ads that influence the general perception and only at the end by the language of the copy. Further research provides more understanding into what differentiating elements drive the consumers to a higher attachment to the brand. Especially diving into visual components. In what concerns the experiment, the hypotheses are reviewed and analyzed:

H1. The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the attitude toward the brand.

The language of the ad did not prove to be a strong predictor at all for the attitude toward the brand. The results from the tests performed indicate that language is not an indispensable element in the formation of the attitude toward the brand. Thus, the first hypothesis is invalidated. On the other hand, the other variables introduced prove to be essential. The most potent impact is in the product category. It is followed by the brand, which also increased the perception of the brand. The last significant predictor is the preference for English ads.

H2. The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for purchase intention.

The language is not the most reliable predictor for purchase intention, either. It does not render significant results, invalidating this hypothesis as well. Unlike the first category, the most influential factor for purchase intention is brand preference. It is accompanied by choice of the product category, and in the end, by the preference for English ads. The reason this classification resembles the previous one

is the association with the previous scale, the purchase of the product coming as a legitimate continuation of a positive attitude toward the brand.

H3. The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the attitude toward the ad.

The third concept tested is the attitude toward the ad. Unfortunately, the language employed does not reveal significant results in this relationship, invalidating this hypothesis. Unlike the first two dependent variables, there are other differences, as well. In this respect, the two significant predictors for this concept are still the brand and the product category. Nevertheless, the values indicate that the relationship is weaker than for the previous scales. The preference for the English ads does not present any significance, hence showing that the perception about the ad is not adjusted in any way by the language of the copy for this age group.

H4. The language of the ad is the strongest predictor for the symbol value of the foreign language.

The language distinguishes itself as the most potent predictor when it comes to its symbol value, validating this hypothesis. Due to the fact, the scale conceived for this concept is centered around the language use and impact, it is appropriate for the language of the copy to take the central place in the spotlight. It is followed by the preference for the English language ads, as a support of the previous concept. In order of impact, the last two positions are occupied by the product category and the brand.

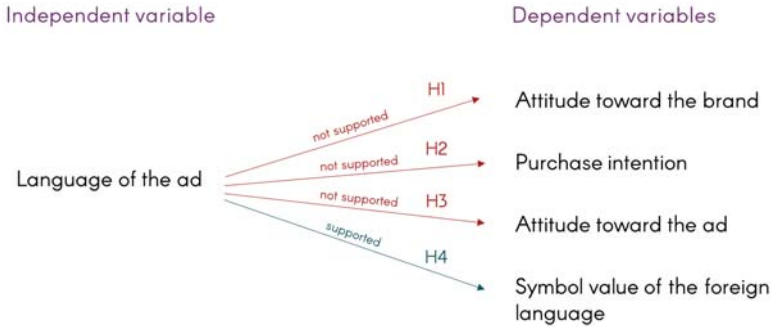


Image 2. *The conceptual model with validation/ invalidation of hypotheses*

The distribution of the language preference across groups and the scale of the symbol value of the foreign language reveals that English is the most appreciated. The scale is conceived to measure which of the two is perceived as being more youthful, it can be a sign of international development, and makes the ad more appealing. The global ad language group records the highest scores.

The language of the ad is the most powerful predictor for the symbol value of the foreign language. It has categorized all aspects regarding the impact of language, from the perception of the consumer in general to the judgment of the ad with the copy in a specific language. The foreign language is the one that ensures the English print ad has higher appealing levels than the other two ads.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The last pages are intertwining the significant findings of the case studies. The scope was discovering how differentiation in advertising is transcribed in digital print advertisements. A subsidiary objective was also exploring how language impacts the message received on the consumers and how it intermediates their relationship with the brand. For the first part of the empirical endeavor, American, British, German, French, and Romanian digital print advertisements have been analyzed. The sample consists of 1010 print ads, on 63 global brands. Their digital nature is given by their presence and diffusion in the online landscape. They are retrieved from major national and international advertising and marketing platforms: Ads of the World, AdForum, La Réclame, IqAds, and BizMarketing.

The analyzed period is 2014-2018. As stated at the beginning of the book, the rationale behind choosing this particular time frame is based on two reasons: the first is choosing a period as recent as possible, to identify the latest trends for the topicality of the subject. Because the analysis of the data began in 2019, the year 2018 was the last year, to have a complete analysis. Furthermore, the fact that these platforms are online, the issues of glocalization, and changes in the international environment need to be tackled.

The chapters dedicated to differentiation and empirical studies reveal four significant concepts that allowed the operationalization of this subject: the official language distance, the perceived brand globalness, visual metaphors, and advertising types. There are adjacent concepts such as salience of space and colors that complimented the visual dimensions of the ads. Or the incongruent element, the single qualitative column of the codebook that deepens the understanding of the metaphors used. It must also be underlined the fact that all the constructs and findings in the paper reflect only the trends of print advertising. The other types of advertising executions of products and services might reveal different approaches.

The official language distance is the first concept revised. It concentrates on the language employed in the print ads. Contrary to what might have been expected, there is a revival of the use of local languages, especially in the last year of analysis. In terms of copy in the ads, the headlines are the sole component that has the highest usage of the English language. The other copy cues, such as the subhead, the body copy, or the slogan are adapted to the local language. More than this, most ads preserve one language in their use. However, Romania proves to be a particular case, gathering the most consistent number of mixed language ads.

The perceived brand globalness is the second concept that discloses insights about the copy, as well as visual dimensions of the ad. One thread of analysis is dedicated to identifying the executions that are standardized across countries and the ones that have different messages or visual elements. With an overwhelming majority, the international brands prefer differentiating their ads. The standardized materials are few in comparison to the total number, becoming the exception, rather than the rule, remaining the attribute of some of the big campaigns. The product categories with the most standardized executions are automotive and beverages. The brands shift toward the local cultures and cultural specifics, especially in terms of small campaigns and witty performances. This is also observed in the case of the spokesperson employed in the ads, as most of them are selected to reflect the local communities. Nevertheless, the brand identity remains untouchable, with a couple of ads distorting the representation of the logo and using a local adaptation.

The visual metaphors bring in the spotlight the creative and uncanny aspects of the print executions, proposing three frames of analysis: the realistic symbiosis, the replacement, and the artificial symbiosis. It is interesting to observe which type of scenario is mostly preferred by the brands. In all of the analyzed countries, artificial symbiosis is the most appraised type of scenario. It implies that the

brands from the analysis that have high levels of communicational maturity, prefer the superposition of different and unexpected symbols. Thus, they offer abstract interpretations of their messages. The salience of space and colors also reveals that, even though the colorized photos are the primordial choice, the countries with a well-rounded communication history (such as the USA), will also employ black and white photos and drawings in a significant amount. This could also be linked to the abstract concept capacity of the brands and an increased lightness of the communicational gestures.

The advertising type is a category with less profound implications, solely focusing on the intent of the print ad. It is split into four categories: call stimulation, product offers, price offers, reconnecting, and reassuring ads. Most of the brands rely upon promoting the product features, thus making the product offer type the most popular among all other categories.

As for the most striking incongruent elements, this reveals actual techniques of how the brands create the fusion of ideas that give birth to the artificial symbiosis. The uncanny associations and the visual distortions are the favorite tactics.

After finishing the general puzzle of how differentiation looks on the various dimensions of an ad, an experiment is performed to see how one of these concepts impacts a particular sample of consumers. It is made based on a survey, with 154 undergraduate participants from the Advertising specialization. The concept chosen for the analysis is the official language distance, with the following practical implication. There are two experimental groups and a control one, each receiving a visually standardized ad to control other elements that can distort the results.

The language distance is measured through four concepts, each accompanied by a scale: the attitude toward the brand, the purchase intention, the attitude toward the ad, and the symbol value of the foreign language. The scales are chosen in a manner in which

they would cover most of the constructs comprised in a print ad while focusing on the central aspects: the message of the ad and the significance of the language used. Nonetheless, the language itself does not reveal significant results, as it did in the previous experimental studies. It appears that it has little impact on the consumer in terms of brand attitude, ad attitude, and the purchase of its products.

Given the fact that the chosen brand is a prominent one for the participants and the international specific of the brand, there are three additional variables tested: the preference for the brand, the choice for the product category, and the preference for the English language ads. It is the same order preserved in terms of impact in the case of the four dependent variables. The first and foremost powerful relationship is between the brand and the attitude toward it, the ad, and the purchase intention. As the participants admitted, it is a highly popular choice among them, with substantial social capital and potential, hence influencing the overall perception of the participants.

The second factor that proves to be of increased importance is the product category. Even though the brand enjoys an increased level of popularity among the three groups, the fact that this category is extremely appealing to them is a potentiator factor. Since the brand is not unknown and new to the market, this construct might have been the most powerful one, due to their attraction to this type of product.

The third-ranking concept in terms of impact is the preference for English ads. It is an element that also influences the consumers' perception, as the more open they are to ads in English, the higher are their results on each of these scales. An equally exciting phenomenon can be recorded in the perception of each group regarding language. Based on the language of the copy of the ad, so did their attitudes fluctuated. The English ad group has the highest scores for their preference for English language ads, while the Romanian ad group records only half of the ratings. The prior randomization checks also

reveal homogeneity among the groups regarding their knowledge of the English language and background. Another striking element is the fact that the control group records the lowest scores for this construct, as well. Thus, although the language does not provide significant results for the first three scales, it does influence their appeal for a brief period.

The language regains its place in the spotlight in the case of the last scale, the one reviewing its symbol value. As indicated by the previous results, the English language is the favorite one, infusing the ads with valences of youthfulness, modernity, and being a marker of urban growth. Of course, there are features such as the international dimension that are expected to be part of its evaluation.

These two case studies provide valuable findings, as well as generate future research perspectives. Several limitations need to be discussed, even for future references.

The first aspects we address are the limitations imposed on one hand by the context or access to certain materials and, on the other hand, by the research design itself. Reconsidering the content analysis, the first element to consider is the unequal distribution of the print advertisements according to years and, consequently, according to countries. As much effort as it was put into gathering a portioned amount for each of these sections, the criteria of selection, as well as matching the brand with executions in each country, did not make this possible. A consistent number of ads have provided notable trends in terms of content, so the drawback of unbalanced distribution was a smaller price to pay.

There is also the issue of missing material. The research includes several platforms, doubled by the national ones because the international platforms generally favor the English language executions. To supplement missing ads or search for campaigns of the same brand across multiple countries leads again to a smaller number in the case of some countries and an uneven distribution overall. A

shortcoming is a fact that the advertising platforms select these executions according to their criteria. As mentioned in the methodological section, it represents an extra filter of selection that ensures authentic print advertisements. However, it is also a filter for other campaigns with print executions that did not meet their requirements but could have been a valuable asset to the research.

It leads us to another physical limitation: the impossibility of gathering all the digital print advertisements from that period, from all the existing digital platforms. Another aspect that ensured the systematic analysis of the material is the use of dummy variables in the codebook. However, this impeached a more profound inquiry. Some are made through a thematic analysis of the incongruent elements. Yet, a more qualitative follow-up will reveal complementing features of these concepts.

The experiment also includes a couple of limitations. The first can be traced back to the participants. The sample is a convenience-based one, with accessible resources. The participants are all college students. The fact that they are advertising students has an impact on the outcomes. The gender is also slightly unbalanced because of the general distribution in each year. There are more female students in this specialization than males.

A new aspect that will be considered in future research is using an unknown brand and maybe a more neutral category. As the findings suggested, the popularity of the employed brand is a strong predictor of each dependent variable, as well as the product category. If these two are controlled from the beginning, the language and the visual cues might be of interest, as well. Of course, in the case of the statistical tests, the researcher admits the limitations, as additional investigations are necessary on this subject.

Several future research perspectives arose with the findings. Regarding the content analysis, for more qualitative information about the differentiation particularities in print ads, each of the four

concepts can be addressed in separate research (official language distance, perceived brand globalness, visual metaphor, and ad types). Starting from this quantitative basis, a more thematical overture would provide details regarding how exactly each brand differentiates its ads according to each of the five countries. Also, as the French-Romanian pair reveals several similarities, more could be investigated into how the two states resemble in terms of content and adaptations of international messages.

A series of interviews with experts from the field will also provide a considerable number of insights regarding the differentiated versus the standardized campaigns, regarding the choices of how international brands opt for executions, and which are the elements they focus on when trying to adapt to the local culture.

The experiment is designed as the first step in a series of subsequent experiments that will pursue the scope of this thesis. The visual cues need further exploration, revising their impact on the same age groups, as well as an extension to other age categories. A comparative study on different types of consumers would also reveal information about which are the elements that stir them according to age and previous experience.

Last but not least, the dominant research perspective that has not yet sufficient data is how brands differentiate their executions in the Eastern European advertising landscape. How they opt to standardize or differentiate their campaigns, and which is the main drive to choose one of the two alternatives. All these converge to one of the most challenging and enduring dilemmas: which are the most suitable copy or visual alternatives for the local cultures. And the gap of local-international perspectives can be filled by brands preoccupied with educating the communicational tastes of their consumers.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The researcher acknowledges no possible conflicts of interest regarding the research, authorship, or publication of the present doctoral thesis.

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Table of contents

Part 1	
Interculturality in the digital age	9
1.1. Thinking global	13
1.2. Glocalization in advertising	16
1.3. Crossroads in International advertising	19
1.4. Core ideas from the first part	28
Part 2	
Differentiation in advertising	35
2.1. Differentiation versus standardization	37
2.2. Tailored advertising	43
2.3. Functions of advertising visuals	47
2.4. Core ideas from the second part	50
Part 3	
Advertising and platforms	55
3.1. Platform outburst	58
3.2. Rhetoric of connectivity	63
3.3. Personalization and privacy	67
3.4. Chapter summary	73
Part 4	
Previous advertising studies (an overview of differentiation)	77
4.1. Language use in print ads	78
4.2. Local and global appeals	83
4.3. Communicational fusion through digital platforms	91
4.4. Core ideas from the third part	95
Part 5	
Digital print advertisements. Prospects of creative scenarios	97
5.1. Patterns of differentiation	99
5.1.1. Countries explored	99
5.1.2. The analyzed dimensions	102
	181

5.2.	Official language distance	116
5.3.	Perceived brand globalness	119
5.4.	Visual metaphors	124
5.4.1.	Realistic symbiosis	127
5.4.2.	Replacement	128
5.4.3.	Artificial symbiosis	129
5.5.	Advertising types	130
5.5.1.	The salience of space and colors	132
5.5.2.	Incongruent elements	134
5.6.	Concluding ideas from the fourth part	137
Part 6		
Discovering the impact of language in print ads		143
6.1.	The participants involved	144
6.2.	Design and measuring dimensions of the ads	145
6.2.1.	The attitude toward the brand	152
6.2.2.	Purchase intention	154
6.2.3.	Attitude toward the ad	155
6.2.4.	Symbol value of the foreign language	157
6.3.	Ethical implications	158
6.3.1.	Concluding ideas from the fifth part	159
Closing thoughts		163
Declaration of Conflicting Interests		171
List of tables		183
List of figures, graphs & charts		184

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 1.** Standards of measurement for cross-country analysis
Table 2. Variables essential in advertising research
Table 3. Timeline of studies focusing on language and local and global appeals
Table 4. Research questions and hypotheses for the content analysis

LIST OF GRAPHS & CHARTS

Graphs

- Graph 1.** Print ads distribution according to countries and years
Graph 2. Official language distance/ yearly evolution
(global versus local languages)

Charts

- Chart 1.** Print ads distribution according to year
Chart 2. Visual scenarios distribution

Images

- Image 1.** The conceptual model of the experimental design
Image 2. The conceptual model with validation/ invalidation of hypotheses



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